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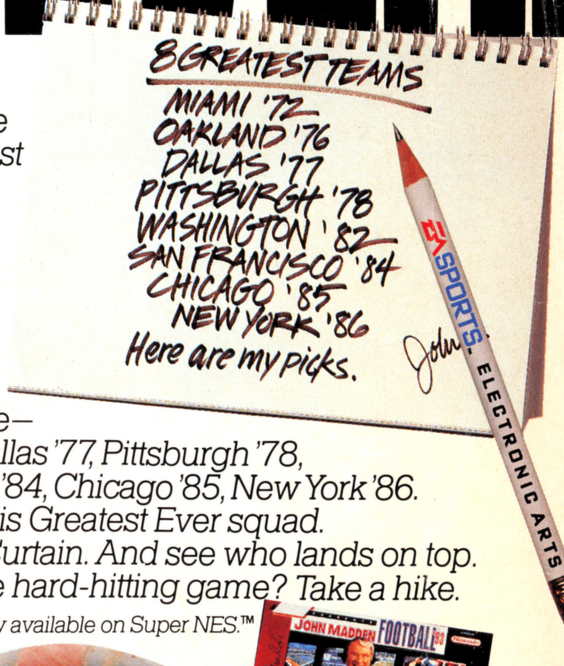

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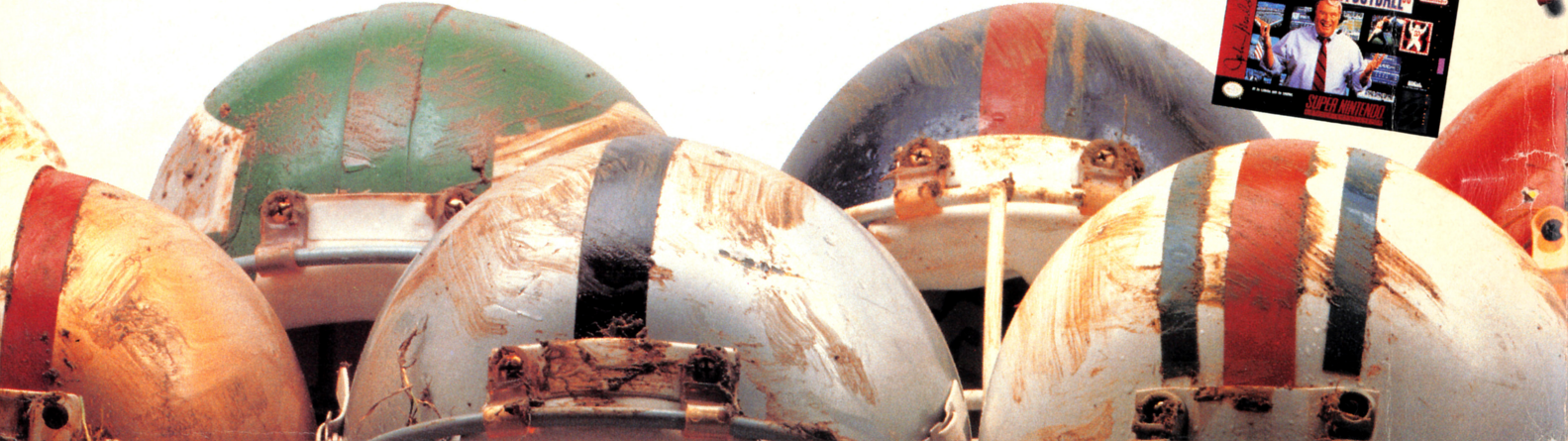

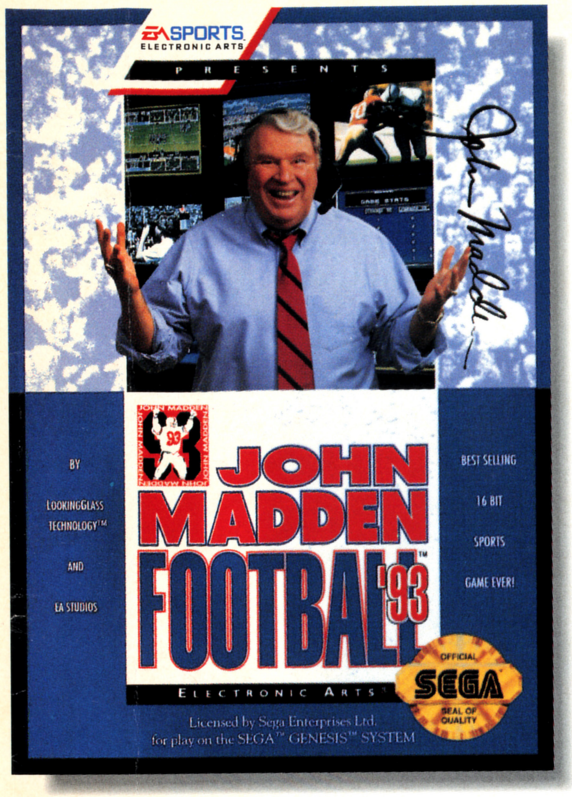

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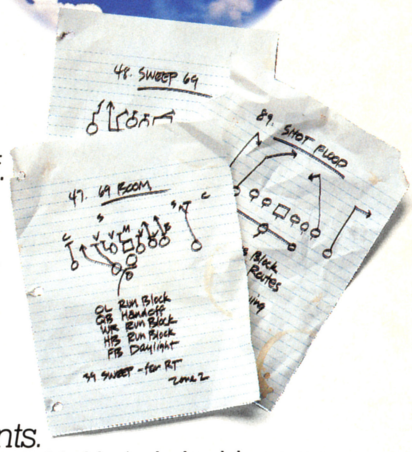

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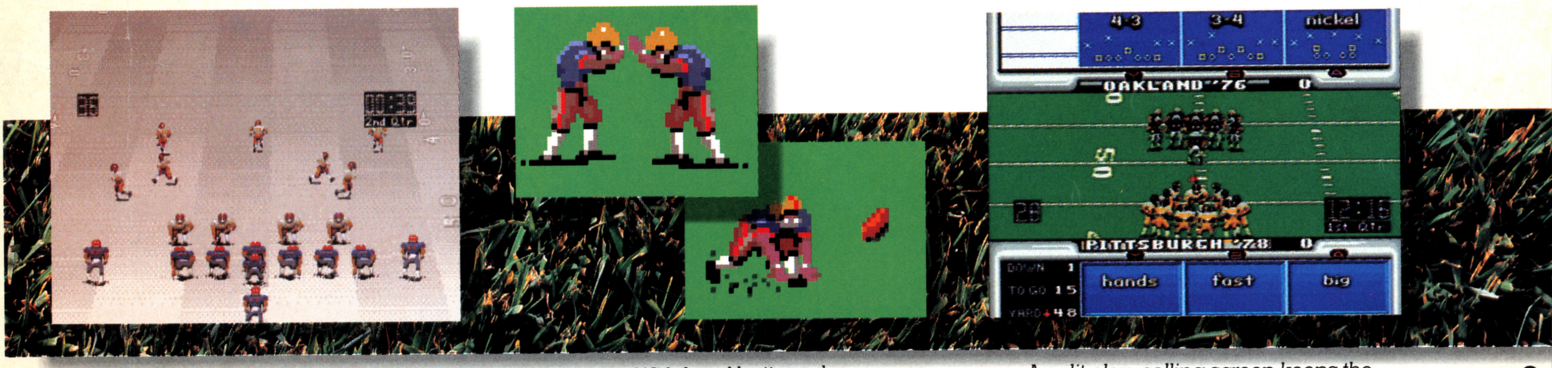

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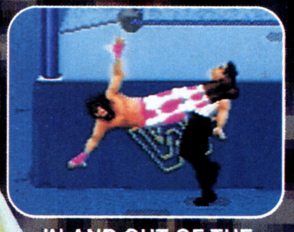

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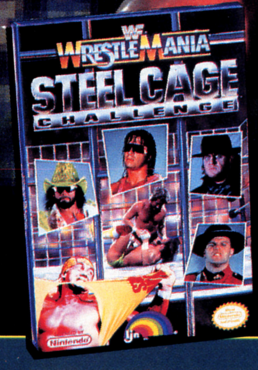

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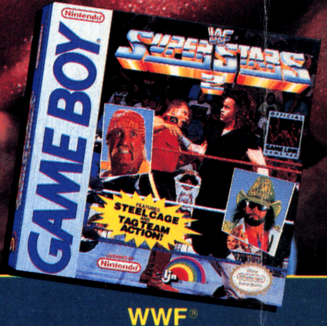

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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: The Man of Steel from Krypton blasts onto the Genesis screen with a new cart from Sunsoft. Turn to page 58 for an in-depth feature review of *Superman*.

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Address all inquiries:
3415 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 520
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Advertising Production Director
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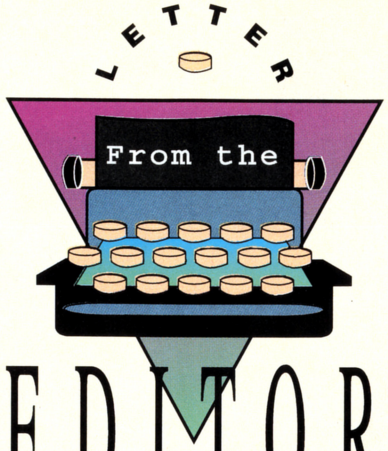
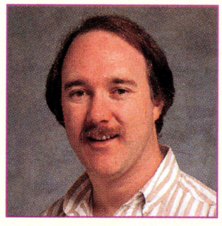


Every now and again, something takes place that encourages you on a basic level. Such was the case on October 22, when Chris Bieniek and I visited the L.A. County + USC Medical Center's Pediatric Pavilion in Los Angeles.

Now, VG&CE veteran readers know that I haven't been exactly kind to Nintendo in this column, taking it to task for what I would call "errors in its ways." Yet a change in public-relations firms and some spirited competition in the market may have humbled the video-game giant somewhat—or maybe not. But what I saw in late October was most encouraging, telling me that hearts certainly do beat at Nintendo (sorry, gang).



We all agree that playing electronic games is an important part of our lives, a primary source of entertainment. In visiting the LAC + USC Pediatric Pavilion, I met some kids whose medical maladies and hospital bed confinement all but prevented them from enjoying any form of game.

Along came the tandem efforts of Nintendo of America and Starlight Foundation (see *News Bits* for the story). Starlight is the brainchild of Emma Samms, an actress whose extensive TV and movie credits include *Dynasty* and, currently again, *General Hospital*. This charitable organization has devoted its resources to granting wishes for sick children, including trips to amusement parks, meetings with celebrities, placement of entertainment centers in hospital settings and the like. It's said that laughter is the best medicine, and Starlight makes a career out of filling that prescription daily.

As a great show of charity and caring, Nintendo created the Fun Center, a colorful, mobile cart equipped with a TV, a VCR, an SNES or NES and some games to go with it. Nintendo is building 161 Fun Centers to be given to 68 hospitals around the country. Sure it's a great tax deduction, but $525,000 is nothing to sneeze at.

The concept is fabulous because no longer are children with illnesses and injuries imprisoned by their hospital beds, as the Fun Center can be wheeled right up to a bedside for a therapeutic "diversion." And, as one doctor noted, hospitalized kids have no control of their environment, so the ability to take on *Super Mario World* or *Pilotwings* gives them an opportunity to exercise some control that can provide a wonderful boost.

There's no debating that games lift people's spirits, but it was touching to watch the overwhelming reaction that Nintendo, Starlight and celebrities like Candace Cameron (*Full House*), Jenna von Oy (*Blossom*), John Moschitta (the world's fastest talking man) and a "digital puppet" of Mario got from these sick children. Congrats on the Fun Center concept, and a heartfelt thanks for letting VG&CE be a part of it.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

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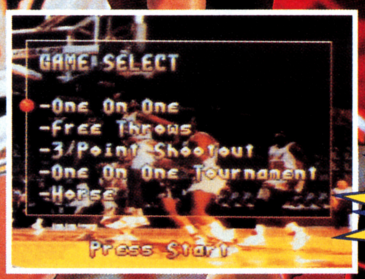

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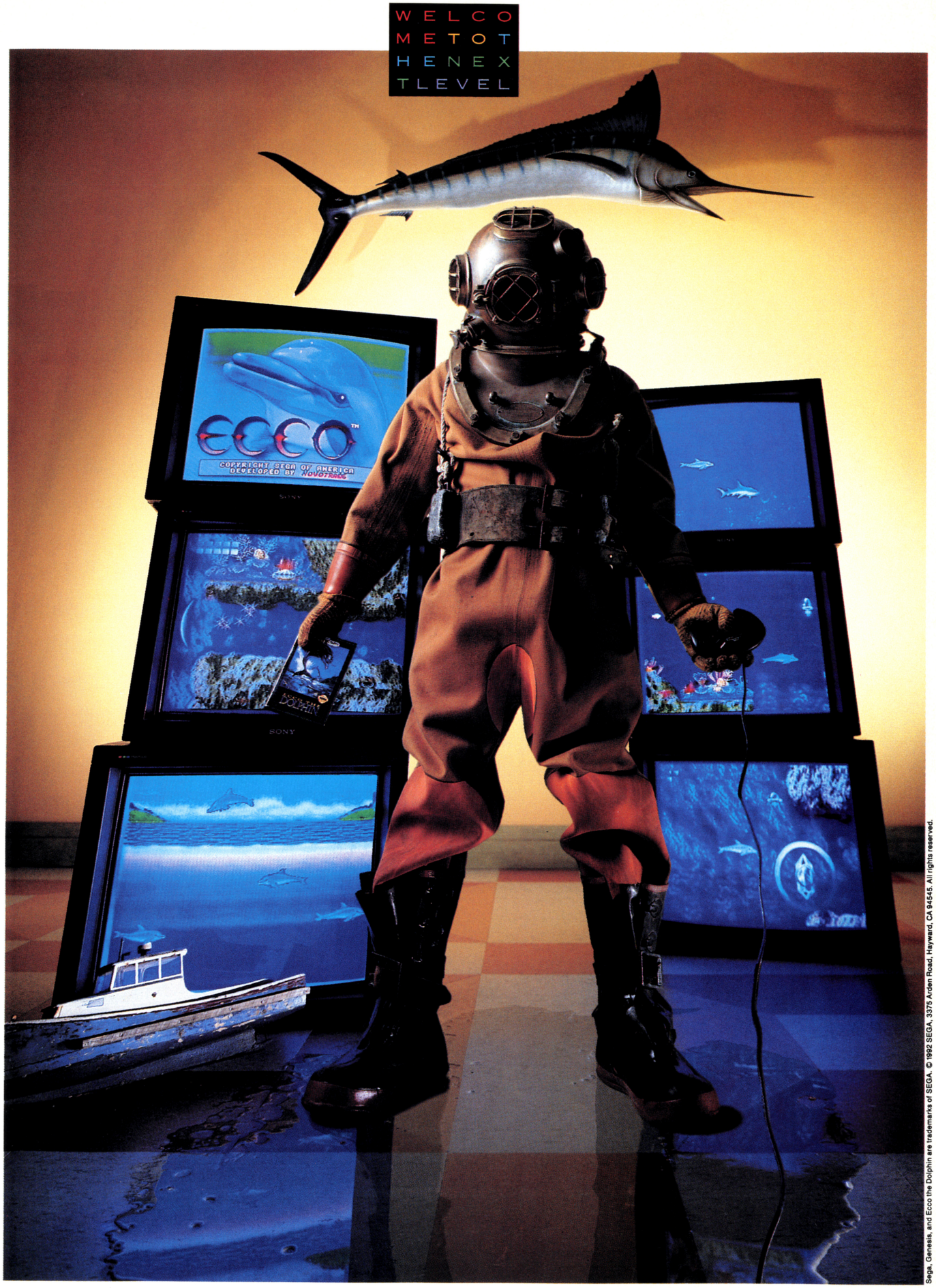

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Experience

An interview with Ed Annunziata,
developer of Ecco the Dolphin™ for Sega™ Genesis.™

life as a

Why a game about dolphins?

Humans are intrigued by dolphins, by their intelligence and ability to communicate with each other. Also the sea as an environment is a pretty interesting contrast to other video games. Most dangerous places aren't beautiful or inviting. But the sea is.

Dolphin

Why the name Ecco?

Ecco is a homonym for Echo. And in Italian it means "I see." So it's a good name for a game where the players use sound to see and communicate. Ecco must use his echolocation to find and rescue his family. Communication is the basis for the entire game.

without ever

How did you make the dolphin motion so lifelike?

Our first task was to duplicate the "feel" of a swimming dolphin. It wasn't easy. The dolphin began as a simple stick figure while we worked on its movement. We created a menu of the physical laws of gravity, water viscosity, and momentum, then we fine-tuned it for months until we felt it was absolutely perfect. In fact, Ecco has been redesigned nine times.

winding up in a can

So the realism was important?

Yeah. We wanted the motion to be so realistic that the player would feel like he was actually the dolphin. The action of the game is so different from other video games that most new players will be totally blown away until they get a feel for it. It's a bit like learning a new sport. And I have one last bit of advice for everyone. Look beyond your eyes with your song.

# of tunafish.

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READER MAIL

BACK TALK

I really like your magazine a lot, and I am wondering if you offer back issues. I missed some issues that I really want to read.

Another thing, what is the technical difference that the SNES has that Nintendo claims to be so advanced? Thanks for listening!

—Duy (Dewey) Van
New Carrollton, Maryland

VG&CE *back issues are available by contacting our back-issue department at (818) 760-8983.*

Regarding what Nintendo claims makes the SNES so advanced, it's hard to say what Nintendo would say. Our view is that the sound chip makes the machine stronger than most of its competitors, but certainly the wealth of software developers is a benefit—though not necessarily technically speaking. We'll have to wait another month or so until Nintendo reveals the first game that employs the SFX chip that's been so heavily touted.

PRICE ON HIS MIND

I have been a subscriber of your magazine for about a year now, and I must say I love it! I am especially pleased that you are now going to cover the Neo•Geo. I do have a complaint though: I currently own a Genesis, a TurboGrafx-16, an SNES and a Neo•Geo. I think by far the best and most fun-to-play system that I own is the Neo•Geo, but every time you have a review of a Neo•Geo game, you seem to be biased against it because of the price. I don't think this is fair. Sure, it's a very expensive video-game system, but most people who have played the system will admit that it's well worth the price.

—Shawn Surmick
Boyertown, Pennsylvania

Price is certainly a consideration when doing a review. To date, VG&CE *hasn't seen much Neo•Geo software that is four times stronger—in our opinion—than many $50 SNES or Genesis games. The main consideration, and it rears its head again in our* Viewpoint *review this month, is that most of the Neo•Geo games are designed for the arcade first and the home second. Design considerations for the two venues are different. When SNK starts to design Neo•Geo games that are home-specific—challenging games such as* Zelda III, Super Mario Kart *and the two* Sonic *games—we're sure the reviews will focus less on price issues.*

FANNING FANZINE FLAMES

There's been talk of VG&CE dropping *Fandango*. I don't believe this would be in your best interest as many of your readers are involved in fandom. Please state your decision as soon as possible.

—Francis J. Cone Jr.
Associate Editor, *Video Reviews*
Troy, New York

Though we aren't "killing" the Fandango *section, we are trimming back on its frequency. Look for it to appear soon, and we urge fanzine editors to continue to send your work to us at* VG&CE/Fandango, *9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.*

LESS RUMORS AND MORE BETTER GRAMMAR, PLEASE

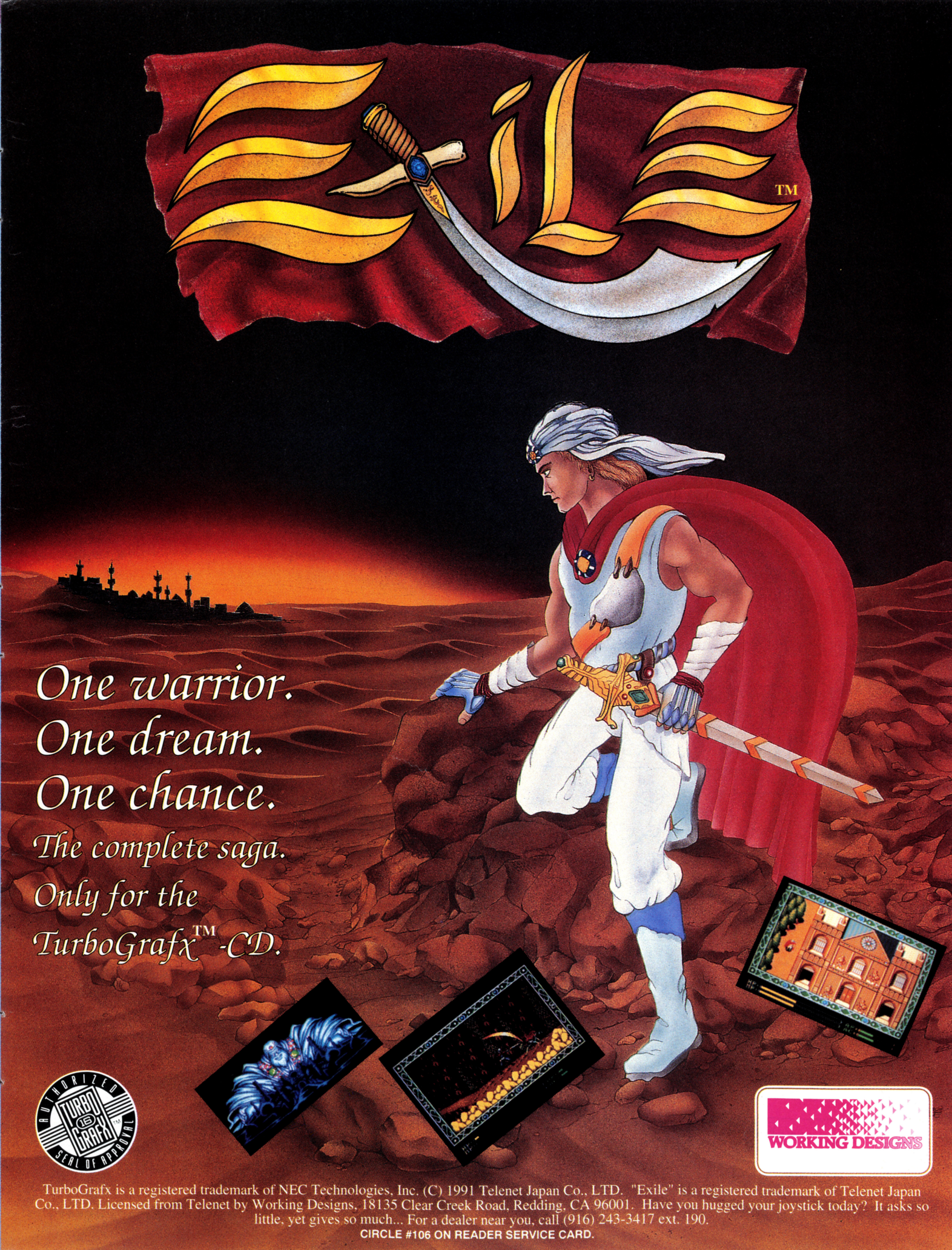
I am writing in response to a couple of letters in the September '92 VG&CE. I must agree with your response to Elliot Everhart's letter. I don't need to read rumors. I'd love to see any magazine print a list of games released by the time the mag is written, not at the expected newsstand date. If the mag's writers have seen it in stores/distribution, I'll find it, but even a month lead time can turn a projected review into a lie if the game is delayed.

Also, you used the phrase *"Anata wa wakarimasu ka?"* in reply to a question in a letter from Mark Price. Typically, a Japanese speaker would only say *"wakarimasu ka?"* as *"anata,"* a pronoun, isn't ordinarily used, at least not where it is clear who you're talking to.

—Russ Perry Jr.
Omro, Wisconsin

Thanks for the support, Russ. We still insist that most readers want to know what's <u>real</u>, not vaporware predictions. If other so-called pundits had it right, the Genesis would be an Atari product and the PC Engine would be sold in the U.S. by Mattel. Hmmm....

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to: *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.



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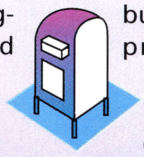
As far as Japanese grammar goes, we're learning. Arigato gozaimasu, Russ-san.

ANOTHER VG&CE VOTE

I just picked up my first copy of VG&CE, and who could resist? The Sonic hologram was worth the cost alone! Unlike most gaming magazines, I was pleasantly surprised at the maturity and intelligence of the copy and layout. Other magazines have a *flash-boom-bang* quality that is tiring after a few issues. They frequently report on products that are years from production, which usually turn out to be vaporware! I commend you on a fine publication!

Also, I must agree with W. Jayson Hill's letter about how simple games are being covered with lush sound and graphics. I just bought a Super NES and I'm so bored with it. Every game is so easy! True, they might look and sound great, but there isn't any challenge there. Almost every SNES game is just a rehash of its old 8-bit counterpart. Do we really need *Super Mario Bros. XXXVII*? And how many times are your going to play *Final Fantasy* or *Zelda* after you've beaten them? I've beaten every SNES game that I've rented in one night (except for RPGs, of course). I feel sorry for those who buy games at $60 a pop! I much prefer the challenging puzzle games of my Genesis, like *Klax*, *Blockout* and even *Kid Chameleon*.



Well, anyway, the real reason I'm writing you is to ask about JVC's WonderMega system. I really want to get the Sega CD when it comes out, but if JVC's going to release its WonderMega soon, I'd rather wait. When is JVC going to release it? Please let me know!

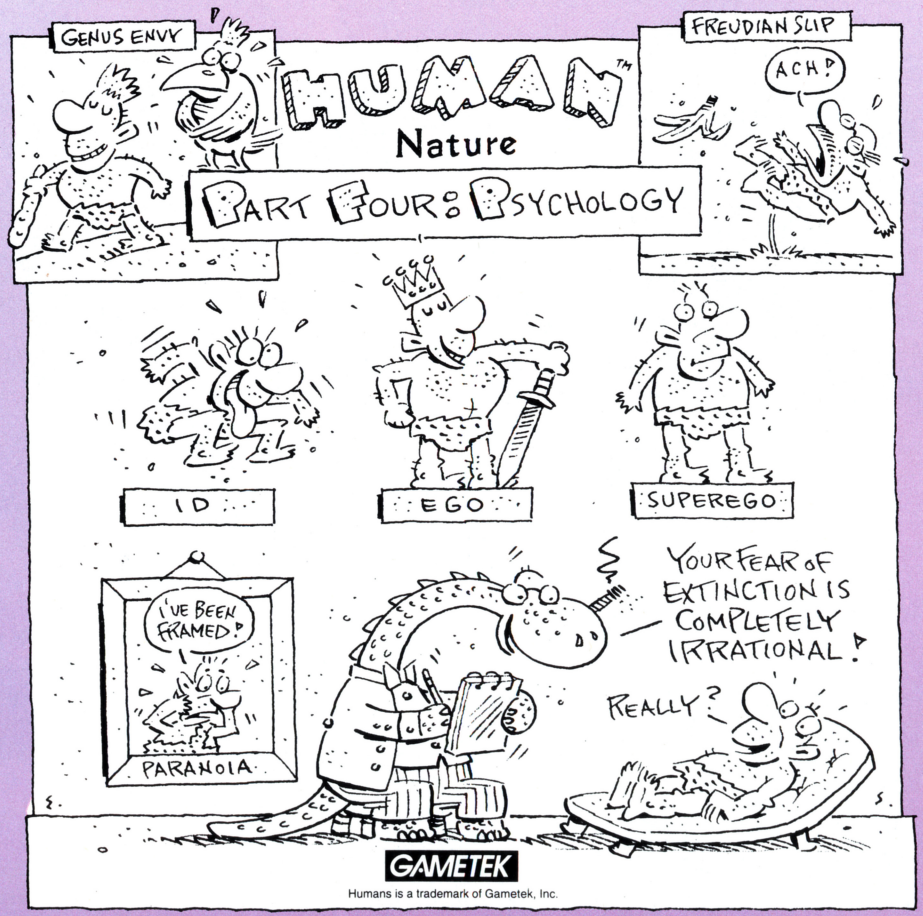
—Navarro Parker
Wichita, Kansas

Unfortunately, there are a lot of companies that don't seem to be trying too hard to create truly <u>new</u> software concepts. It's something we'll have to live with. However, as the consumer, you have the ability to send messages to these companies by not buying these clone products.

To answer your other question, JVC expects to bring the WonderMega to the American market, but there is no date set for its release at this point. The holdup at this juncture is cost—JVC wants to make sure the product will be affordable to the masses before its release. Keep your eye on VG&CE *for more info as we get it.*

CORRECTION

The *News Bits* section of the November 1992 VG&CE had an error in one of its stories. Baen Books will be bringing out a series of *The Bard's Tale* books, starting with *Castle of Deception*, which will be authored by Mercedes Lackey and Josepha Sherman. Our apologies for the mistake.



CIRCLE #107 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

MODEM OWNERS!

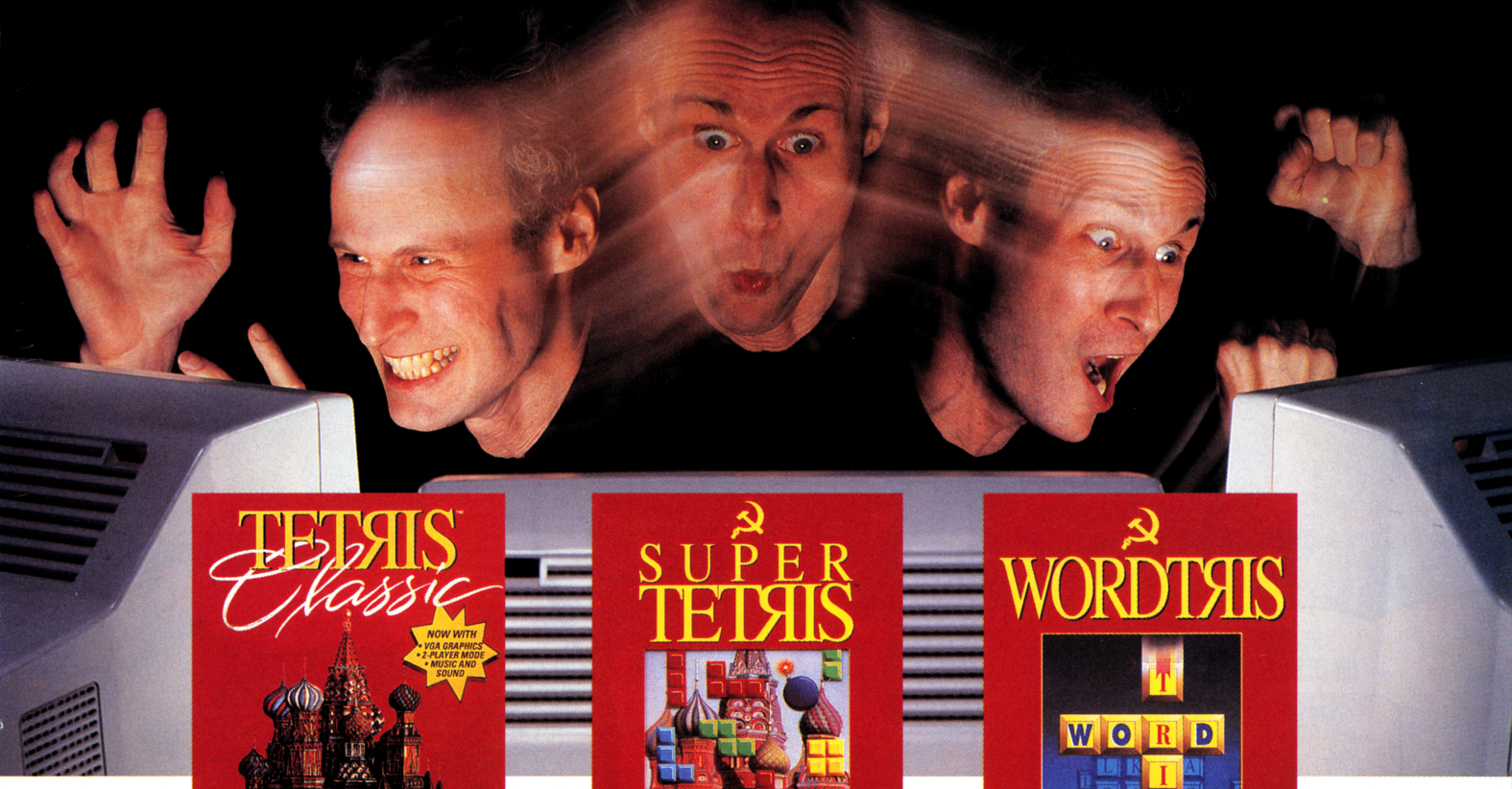
VG&CE can be reached on-line with comments and hints. We'd be happy to hear from you. Electronic Mail can be sent to us on the following systems:

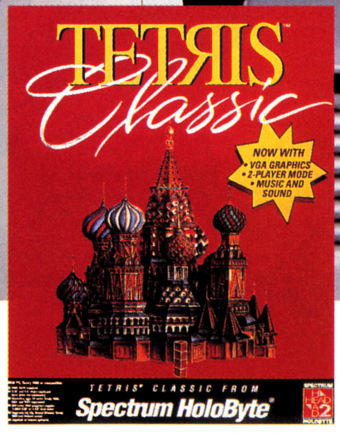
CompuServe: 70007,3554
DELPHI: VIDGAMES
GEnie: VIDGAME
Prodigy: CKJB66A
MCI Mail: VIDGAMES

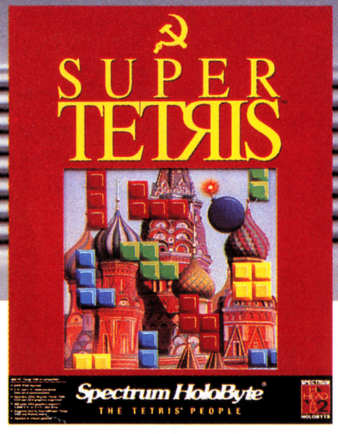
If you'd like more information on how these systems operate and how to sign up, give them a call and tell them VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT sent you!

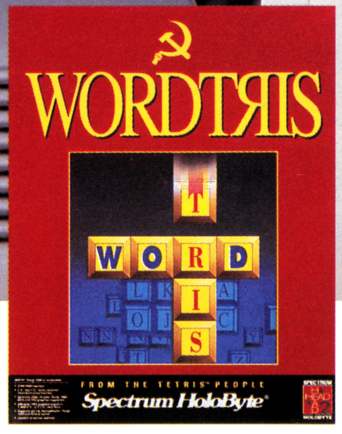
CompuServe: (800) 848-8990
GEnie: (800) 638-9636
DELPHI: (800) 695-4005
Prodigy: (800) 822-6922 x556
MCI Mail: (800) 444-6245

GREAT NEWS FOR TETRIS® ADDICTS.





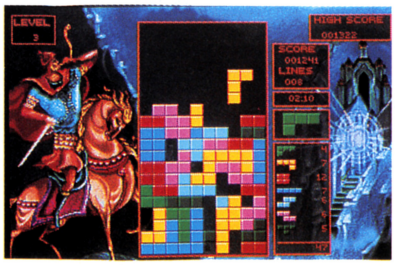




YOUR ADDICTION JUST BECAME 3 TIMES WORSE.

Introducing Tetris® Classic. Great new VGA graphics. Great new features. Great music and sound.

It's everything Tetris is–and more! A slew of new challenging options, including head-to-head play, competitive or cooperative modes and a frenzied dual-pit play field. VGA graphics give the game a hot new look. And the music and sound effects are worthy of a 5-star Hollywood production. It isn't easy to improve a classic. But we just did.



Tetris Classic available for IBM DOS and Windows.

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The super sequel to best-selling Tetris. Super challenging. Super addictive. Because it comes with a blockbusting twist–bomb pieces that help you blast your way down to the bottom of the pit and discover treasures. Super Tetris. Just when you thought you'd broken the habit.

Available for IBM DOS, Windows and Mac/MacII.

Wordtris.™

If you thought Tetris was fun, look what we did to Wordtris. This time the falling pieces are letter blocks. Instead of forming lines, you form words. The challenge builds as the levels go higher and the blocks fall faster and faster. It's Tetris made letter perfect. You have our word on it.

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1-800-695-GAME (Orders Only)
For technical questions call: 1-510-522-1164 (M-F: 9am–5pm PST)

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CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

MORE FUN THAN ROLLIN

What could be more fun than rolling Homer in the snow? Lots of things, really...but these Simpsons™ video games are the closest.

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Naughty or nice, let everyone know you want The Simpsons™ video games...otherwise you'll get socks and underwear!

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IT'S FIST AGAINST CLAW IN DR. CRAB'S LAIR!

G HOMER IN THE SNOW!

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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed ***Tip Sheet*** to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem with a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to:

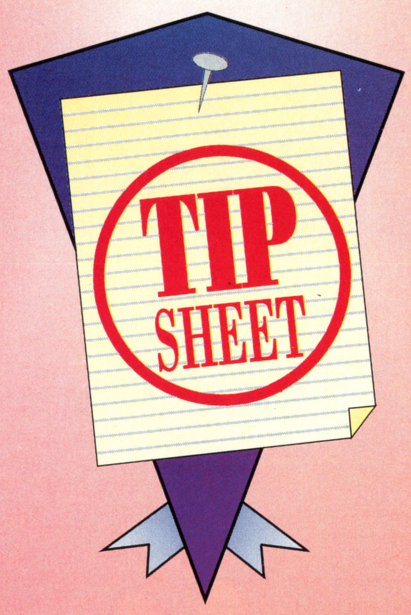
VG&CE

9171 Wilshire Blvd.,

Suite 300

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Attn: *Tip Sheet*



BY
CHRIS BIENIEK

We are stuck in *Soul Blazer* (Enix for the Super NES). We can't find the sword that we need to beat Metal Mantis. Please help!

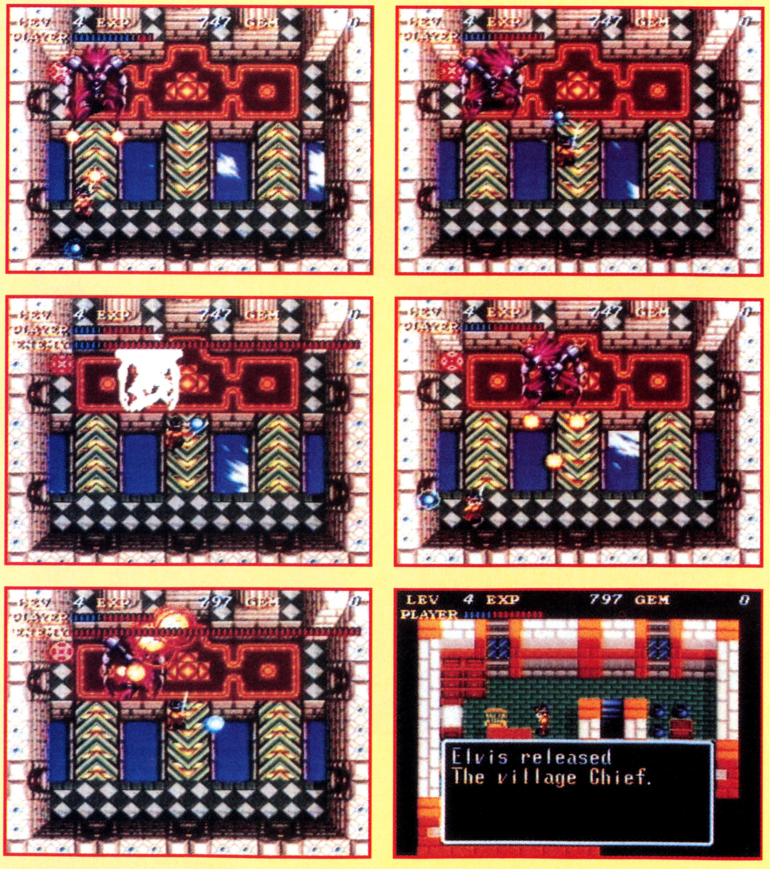
—Henry and Sarah Kotz
London, Ontario, Canada

We've heard this question several times since Soul Blazer *was released, and the answer has surprised a lot of people. The special sword mentioned by the spirit is not necessary in order to defeat Metal Mantis—in fact, you won't even discover this weapon until much later in the game.*

Like many boss characters, Metal Mantis moves in a predictable fashion; that is, it doesn't follow a set pattern, but it does react to your movements exactly the same way each time you approach it to strike. You should never attack by moving up the "conveyor belts" on the right or left side of the screen, as it's much more important to run away from the creature than it is to attack with great speed.

When you enter the battle, move around at the bottom of the screen until Metal Mantis starts to follow you, then head for the lower-left corner of the room—your foe will also move to the left. As soon as it spits three fireballs down the left wall, sneak up the middle "belt" and take a swing or two while you're running in place, then rush back to the lower-left corner.

That's all there is to it! You'll have to repeat the process many times, since the boss can take about 50 hits before it expires. The movement of the middle "belt" sends you back to the bottom of the screen so quickly that you can even outrace the fireballs, if necessary.



WIPE THE SMILE OFF THIS FACE!

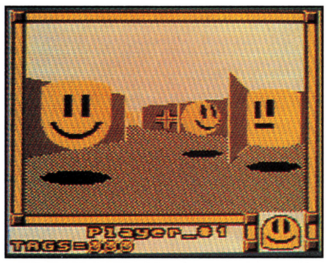
Game Boy Game of the Year!
Game Player's Magazine '91

Strategy Game of the Year!
GamePro Magazine '91

Here's your chance to wipe the smiles off those annoying happy faces once and for all! In FaceBall 2000, "Have a Nice Day" takes on a whole new meaning — in first-person perspective, with 3D graphics and 360° maneuvering!

GET INTO YOUR GAME BOY...

And we mean *into!* FaceBall 2000 is a new virtual reality game for 1 to 4 players. You don't just *see* your character, you *are* your character! You'll feel like you're actually *inside* your Game Boy as you move through CyberScape's more than 70 treacherous mazes — or the Arena, in fast-paced rounds of high-tech combat.



WATCH OUT! They only look happy!

PUSH SUPER NES TO THE LIMIT!

Come face-to-face with a *super-mess* of enemies — in full color with amazing 3D graphics! Enter the CyberZone where you'll be surrounded by evil Smiloids lurking in an endless series of mazes. Defeat the Master Smiloid... or have a *very* bad day! Two-player split-screen action lets you battle it out in the Arena against a friend, or team up and face the evil Smiloids together. FaceBall 2000 for the Super NES. Don't miss it!

Team up or play one-on-one in the Arena.

Face evil Smiloids in CyberZone's endless mazes.

NEW for the Super NES!

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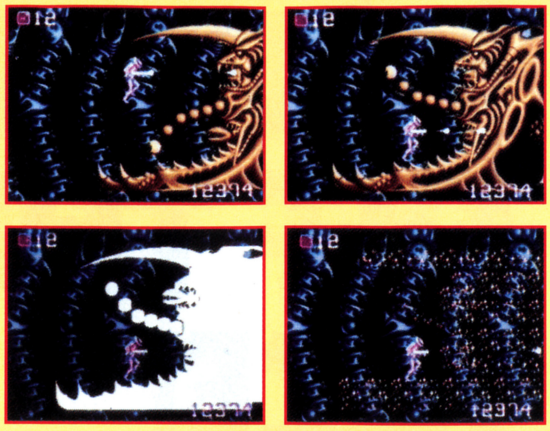
CIRCLE #110 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

I own the Genesis, and I've been having a lot of trouble with a game called *Shadow of the Beast* by Electronic Arts. What's the deal with this game? It's just too hard! I can get pretty far into the game, but I always get stuck during the part where your character is flying down a corridor and you run into a lobster boss with a floating eyeball. There's no way to hurt this thing—how do I kill it?

—Sidney Johnson
Hillsboro, Oregon



You're not getting close enough, Sidney. Watch the pattern of the boss' missiles and the movement of the tentacle. When you spot an opening, zip between the eyeball and the lower claw and you'll see the creature's heart at the lower right. You may have missed it because the screen doesn't scroll far enough unless you move in this close.

You'll need to weave in and out of this position in order to fire enough shots at the boss' heart, as it takes about eight hits before exploding in a shower of sparks.

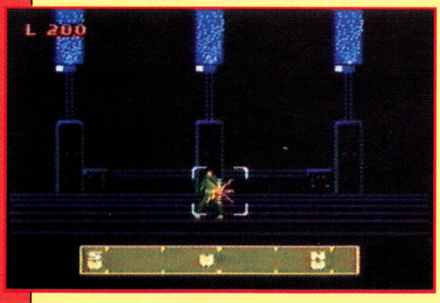
I have a question about an old NES game, Vic Tokai's *Golgo 13: Top Secret Episode*. How do you defeat the DREK computer in the last level? Also, do you know of any Easter eggs for this game? Any help would be greatly appreciated.

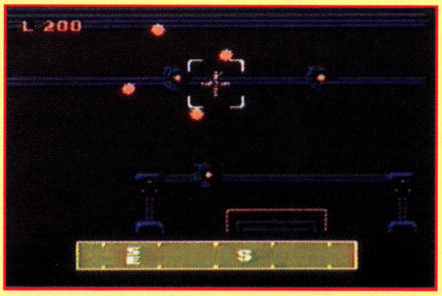
—Brent A. Strathman
Seneca, Kansas

Glad to be of service, Brent. Top Secret Episode *is one of my all-time favorite video games; I'd say it's one of the best titles ever released for the NES.*

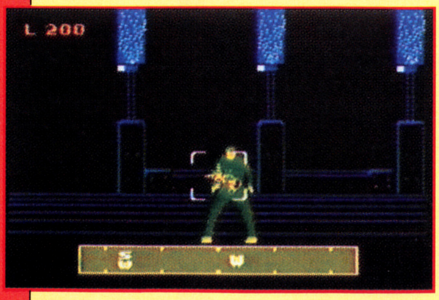
Shutting down the DREK computer is a fairly simple task if you know the proper procedure, so listen up:

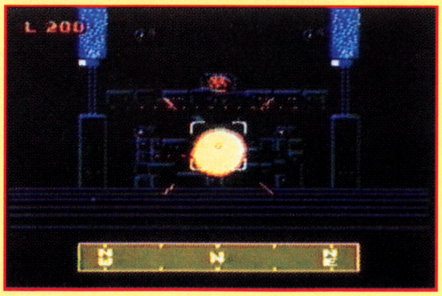
The first thing you'll see is Smirk, the evil living brain behind the DREK empire. Ignore him—you can't hurt him yet. Focus your attention on the green clones that jump out of the bubbly blue clone machines on either side of the brain. You must shut these machines down by shooting out the flashing red light on top of each machine. The clones will be firing at you while you do this, but they won't do much damage; at this point, you have to stop the active machines from producing more clones.





Once the first two machines are off, take out the clones one at a time by using this three-step process: First, shoot one while it's shooting at you. It'll disappear and reappear much closer to you. Shoot it again and it will explode—but its head will fly up from the explosion and zoom at you. The heads are extremely dangerous, so wait for them and pick them off before they can hurt you.

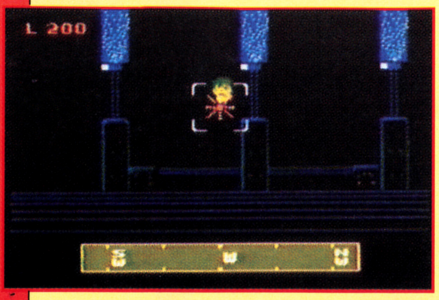


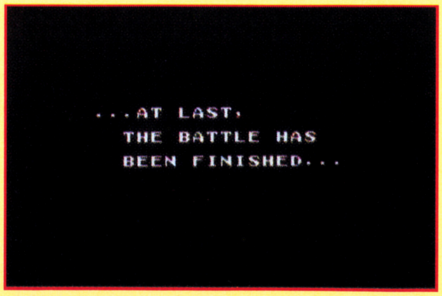


By this time, Smirk will have started up two more clone machines to the right of you. Take out the machines and their clones the same way. Three more machines start to blink after that, so be prepared to take on three more clones, always remembering to dispatch them one at a time.

Next, look for the room's exit door. You'll find three laser "pods" that move back and forth above the door. Destroy the pods, and you'll be ready for Smirk.

To wipe out the DREK empire and finish the game, just shoot the circular red plate in front of the living brain. The brain will rise into the air for one dramatic, final shot.





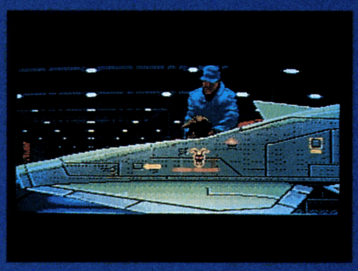
Finally, here's a Top Secret Episode *Easter egg from the December 1989 issue of* VG&CE. *After the helicopter is shot down in the game's demo, you'll see Duke with his gun, then a close-up of his eyes; you must hit* ***START*** *on Controller 1 the instant his eyes begin to appear. Then, at the title screen, press and hold Upper Left, A and B on Controller 2 and Up, A and B on Controller 1. Hold all of those buttons down while you hit* ***START*** *on Controller 1. You should get a stage-select menu.*

Top Game Honors From
OMNI
COMPUTE
Computer Gaming World
Games Magazine
Game Players Magazine

Kick Some Kilrathi Butt!

Unretouched Super Nintendo Wing Commander Screens

More than 40 separate missions that get more complex as you progress



It's like you're the star in a deep space action-adventure movie

Wingmates like "Spirit" cover your tail as you fight the tiger-like Kilrathi

Trounce the Kilrathi and be a hero-Lose and attend your own funeral

Nothing else will have prepared you for the look and feel of Wing Commander on your Super NES.

Here's why!

Wing Commander has incredible 3-D action, full-screen explosions, 33 super stereo soundtracks and CD game quality. But it plays on your Super Nintendo.

Wing Commander is the most extremely cool, 3-D Space Combat Simulator with more than 40 separate deep space missions that progress to near suicide dogfighting with the tiger-like Kilrathi. It's like an action-adventure movie - *and you're the star!*

Are you up for the challenge? This award-winning megahit is now available for the Super NES. Kick some Kilrathi butt with Wing Commander.

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WING COMMANDER®
The 3-D Space Combat Simulator

CIRCLE #111 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

CHUCK YOUR SU

He's fat, he stinks and he's one of the best-loved characters ever to climb his way out of the primordial slime and onto your video screen.

In this rockin' new 16-bit adventure for your Super NES,

Chuck Rock is distributed by Sony Imagesoft Inc., 9200 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 820, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Sony Imagesoft and Imagesoft are trademarks of Sony Electronic Publishing Company. Chuck Rock is a trademark of Core Design Limited.
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ROCKS PER NES!

you'll join Chuck Rock on his belly-bashing, odor-kicking, rock-tossing mission to rescue his wife Ophelia from arch-rival Gary Gritter. You and Chuck, who's equipped with a pea-sized brain and nuclear body odor, have to crush some pretty strange characters, like the wild and wooly mammoth, one mean triceratops and a saber-toothed tiger. Together, you and the Chuckster swim through swamps, travel up volcanoes and shiver your way through the ice age — all in the name of love!

Nineteen levels set in five prehistoric worlds. Eye-popping graphics and very cool animation. If you wanna rock, you gotta get Chuck Rock.

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

LICENSED FOR PLAY BY Nintendo

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

SONY IMAGESOFT™

CIRCLE #112 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Top Coin-Ops for October 1992

Figures are courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of arcade operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Mortal Kombat* by Williams
2. *Street Fighter II: Championship Edition* by Capcom
3. *Lethal Enforcer* by Konami
4. *Terminator 2* by Midway
5. *Sunset Riders* by Konami
6. *Turbo Outrun* by Sega
7. *Steel Gunner* by Namco
8. *Double Axle* by Taito
9. *S.C.I.* by Taito
10. *Super High Impact* by Williams

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Virtua Racing* by Sega
2. *Suzuka 8 Hours* by Namco
3. *Stadium Cross* by Sega
4. *Final Lap 2* by Namco
5. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
6. *Steel Talons* by Atari
7. *X-Men* by Konami
8. *Grand Prix Star* by Jaleco
9. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
10. *Mad Dog* by Betson/ALG

Best Video Software

1. *World Heroes* by SNK
2. *Art of Fighting* by SNK
3. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
4. *Aero Fighters* by McO'River
5. *Undercover Cops* by Irem
6. *Wrestlefest* by American Technos
7. *Steel Gunner 2* by Namco
8. *Raiden* by Fabtek
9. *King of the Monsters 2* by SNK
10. *Atomic Punk 2* by Irem

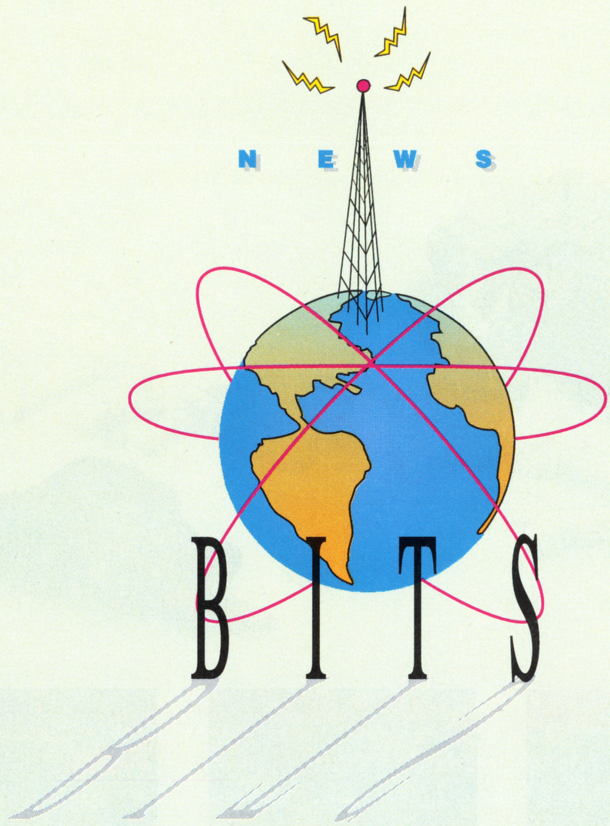
Top Video Games for October 1992

The lists of top-selling video-game software are provided courtesy of Babbage's.

Super NES

1. *Super Mario Kart* by Nintendo
2. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
3. *NCAA Basketball* by Nintendo
4. *Mario Paint* by Nintendo
5. *Mystic Quest* by Square Soft
6. *Super Play Action Football* by Nintendo
7. *Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* by Nintendo
8. *Wings 2* by Namco
9. *Soul Blazer* by Enix
10. *Super Double Dragon* by Tradewest

COMPILED BY DAVID S. MOSKOWITZ



Nintendo Becomes Frequent Hospital Visitor

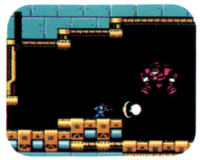
Nintendo has donated $525,000 in the form of 161 "Fun Centers," which are mobile entertainment centers that were disseminated to 68 hospitals nationwide in October and November. Each Fun Center, which individually costs $3,000 to construct and stock, will contain a TV/monitor, VCR, SNES or NES and a library of games. For simplicity of operation and convenience, a Fun Center can be wheeled up to a hospital bed for game play.

The entertainment crash carts will also be emblazoned with the name of the Starlight Foundation, the charity organization founded by TV and movie actress Emma Samms, whose brother died of aplastic anemia when he was eight and she was nine. Ms. Samms can be seen weekdays on ABC's *General Hospital*.

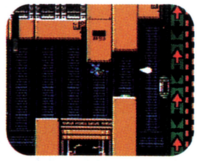
Among those accompanying Ms. Samms and Phil Rogers, VP of operations for Nintendo, on this mission of giving were Candace Cameron from ABC's *Full House*; Jenna von Oy from NBC's *Blos-*

Help Mega Man turn Proto Man into spare parts.

Proto Man's got Dr. Light. But Mega Man is back—ready to put some heavy pedal to the metal to defeat Stone Man, Gyro Man, Star Man, Wave Man, Charge Man and other robotic goons. Use his Mega Buster and Super Arrow to make it to the castle and put Proto Man on the scrap heap forever.



Use your modified Mega Buster before this robot gets the jump on you.



When you hit the gravity chamber, it's hard to tell which way is up.

Catch a wave on your hydro-cycle and sink this robot for good.

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CAPCOM®

CIRCLE #113 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Sega Genesis

1. *NFL SportsTalk Football* by Sega
2. *NHLPA Hockey '93* by Electronic Arts
3. *Taz-Mania* by Sega
4. *Evander Holyfield "Real Deal" Boxing* by Sega
5. *RBI 4* by Tengen
6. *John Madden Football '92* by Electronic Arts
7. *Dungeons & Dragons: Warriors of the Eternal Sun* by Sega
8. *Team USA Basketball* by Electronic Arts
9. *LHX Attack Chopper* by Electronic Arts
10. *Desert Strike* by Electronic Arts

NES

1. *Tecmo Super Bowl* by Tecmo
2. *Dragon Warrior III* by Enix
3. *Ninja Gaiden II* by Tecmo
4. *Tetris* by Nintendo
5. *Yoshi* by Nintendo
6. *Adventures of Link* by Nintendo
7. *Might & Magic* by American Sammy
8. *Super Mario Bros 3* by Nintendo
9. *Legend of Zelda* by Nintendo
10. *Target Renegade* by Taito

TurboGrafx-16/Turbo Duo

1. *Order of the Griffon* by TTI
2. *Air Zonk* by TTI
3. *Exile* by Working Designs
4. *Side Arms* by Radiance
5. *Cosmic Fantasy II* by Working Designs
6. *Neutopia II* by TTI
7. *Falcon* by TTI
8. *New Adventure Island* by TTI
9. *Vigilante* by NEC
10. *Final Lap Twin* by NEC

Nintendo Game Boy

1. *Kirby's Dream Land* by Nintendo
2. *Super Mario Land* by Nintendo
3. *Yoshi* by Nintendo
4. *Baseball* by Nintendo
5. *Quarth* by Konami
6. *Four-In-One Funpack* by Interplay
7. *The Simpsons 2: Bart Versus The Juggernauts* by Acclaim
8. *The Simpsons: Escape From Camp Deadly* by Acclaim
9. *WWF Superstars 2* by LJN
10. *Tennis* by Nintendo

Sega Game Gear

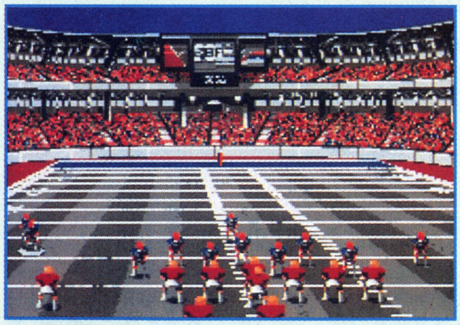
1. *Chuck Rock* by Sega
2. *Taz-Mania* by Sega
3. *Columns* by Sega
4. *Outrun Europa* by U.S. Gold
5. *Clutch Hitter* by Sega
6. *Joe Montana Football* by Sega

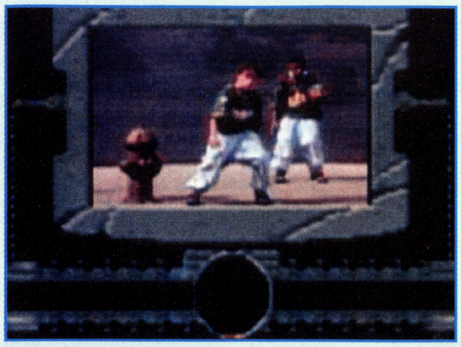
som; John Moschitta, known for his fast-talking commercials for Galoob's *Micro Machines*, among others; and Steve Garvey, former Los Angeles Dodger and San Diego Padre baseball player. However, the one who stole the show was "Mario In Real Time (MIRT)," a digital puppet created by SimGraphic Engineering Corp. of Pasadena, California. (See the September 1992 VG&CE, page 76, for MIRT's appearance at the 1992 Summer CES.) As master of ceremonies, MIRT entertained the audience of press, hospital staff and sick children, then the emissaries walked through the hospital wards, playing on the Fun Centers and handing out stuffed animals and photos. VG&CE's Andy Eddy and Chris Bieniek also handed out magazines for the children to read.

Sega Unveils CD Product Line

New York, NY—At a gala press event held at the Marriott Marquis hotel in the heart of New York's Times Square, Sega of America formally unveiled its CD-ROM peripheral and software lineup. Sega expects 10-15 games to be available along with the CD-ROM unit during the second week of November. Some of the games unveiled include: *Night Trap*, an interactive game that features 104 minutes of full-motion video; *Sewer Shark*, an action game where you blast mutant sewer rats; and *Make Your Own Music Video With Marky Mark & The Funky Bunch*, which lets you edit and customize your own personal music video.

Sega expects to sell 200,000 CD-ROM drives during the 1992 holiday season and 300,000 games for that system. The Sega CD will retail for $299, while games are expected to sell for around $49-$59.





Galoob Releases SNES Game Genie

Galoob has released a Game Genie for the SNES. This latest in its "video-game enhancer" product line will retail for $59.95 and come with a booklet containing codes for 51 games, including *Street Fighter II*. Anyone who purchases the Game Genie before June 30, 1993, will receive codes for the next 50 games at no charge (depending on availability).

Nintendo Joins Sony Development of CD Technology

Nintendo Co. Ltd. of Japan and Sony Corporation of Japan have signed an agreement exchanging technology to create CD-ROM XA "bridge format" and making their CD-ROM players compatible.

According to the agreement, Sony will begin manufacture of a new game system that will play both Super NES cartridges and CD-based game products. Similarly, software created for Nintendo's Super NES CD-ROM discs will be fully compatible with the Sony game machine.

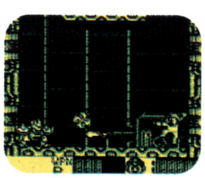
Nintendo also announced that this agreement in no way hinders current work between Nintendo and Philips, which should make software for the SNES CD-ROM compatible with Philips' Compact Disc Interactive (CD-I) hardware.

EA and ESPN Settle Dispute

Electronic Arts and ESPN have settled their legal claims against one another stemming from the Electronic Arts Sports Network (EASN) logo. In September of 1992, ESPN filed an action in the U.S. District Court in New York City composed of alleged claims against the EASN logo. Elec-

Now Mega Man must Really save the Earth.

What in the world is Dr. Wily up to now? He's drilling through the earth's crust to tap its energy and create his most powerful robot of all. And eight of his most famous robots are back in commission. The danger comes in waves for you and Rush on the way to Wily's underwater headquarters. Do you have what it takes to send Wily to an oily end?



With your Mega Buster you can turn Punk into junk.

Use your Mega Buster to turn this whale into a pile of useless blubber.

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CIRCLE #114 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

7. *Castle of Illusion* by Sega
8. *Super Monaco GP II* by Sega
9. *Olympic Gold: Barcelona* by U.S. Gold
10. *Spider-Man* by Sega

Atari Lynx

(All games this month produced by Atari.)

1. *Baseball Heroes*
2. *NFL Football*
3. *Shadow of the Beast*
4. *Switchblade II*
5. *Pinball Jam*
6. *Gauntlet*
7. *Steel Talons*
8. *Warbirds*
9. *Batman Returns*
10. *Robotron 2084*

Top IBM PC Games for August 1992

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, D.C., based on sales data received from Software Etc., Electronics Boutique, Babbage's and Waldensoftware.

Top 10 IBM PC Games

1. *Links* by Access
2. *Civilization* by MicroProse
3. *Aces of the Pacific* by Sierra On-Line
4. *Indiana Jones: Fate of Atlantis* by LucasArts
5. *Quest for Glory I* by Sierra On-Line
6. *Legend of Kyrandia* by Virgin Games
7. *F117A Stealth Fighter 2.0* by MicroProse
8. *Powermonger* by Electronic Arts
9. *Gunship 2000* by MicroProse
10. *Darklands* by MicroProse

Top 10 IBM PC Education Games

1. *Where in the World Is Carmen SanDiego?* by Brøderbund
2. *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* by Software Toolworks
3. *Where in the U.S.A. Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
4. *New Math Blaster Plus* by Davidson
5. *Your Personal Trainer for the S.A.T* by Davidson
6. *Algeblaster Plus* by Davidson
7. *Body Works* by Automap
8. *Playroom* by Brøderbund
9. *Reader Rabbit 1* by The Learning Company
10. *Mario Typing* by Interplay

tronic Arts followed in October, beginning their own court proceedings to keep ESPN from using its logo in the interactive entertainment industry.

Electronic Arts has changed the name of its EASN line to EA Sports and will be advertising on ESPN.

Triax Controllers Released

Triax has released Turbo Touch 360 controllers for the Genesis, NES and SNES. These controllers, which simply require players to touch but not push a directional pad, will be the first video-game accessory with a money-back guarantee. The NES Turbo Touch 360 will retail for approximately $25, while the SNES and Genesis versions will cost approximately $35.

Sega to Appeal Accolade Victory

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has issued an opinion explaining why it dissolved Sega's injunction which prevented Accolade from marketing games for the Sega Genesis.

Focusing on the key issue of reverse engineering, in this case Accolade engineers disassembling and studying the Genesis to learn how to program games for it, the court stated that "disassembly is the only means of gaining access to those unprotected...and Accolade has a legitimate reason for seeking such access...[and] that objective was a legitimate and lawful one."

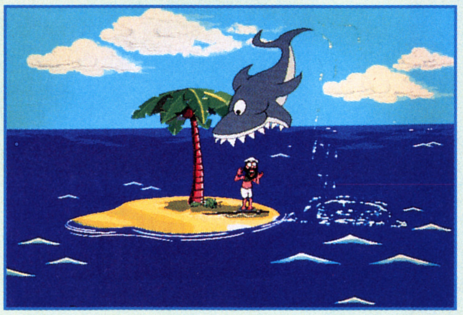
The day immediately after the court's statement, Sega filed a new petition for a rehearing of its copyright-infringement case. Sega spokesmen said that "the court improperly applied the doctrine of fair use and disregarded established precedents."

Sega Genesis Menacer to Be Packaged with T2 Cartridge

The Sega Genesis Menacer controller will be available with the Acclaim cartridge *T2: The Arcade Game* for a retail price of $89.99. The standard Menacer package, which includes the controller and a cartridge with six games on it, will still be available for $69.99. *T2: The Arcade Game* can also be purchased alone for $49.95.

Dynamix Adds Entertainment to Windows

Dynamix has released two software packages for Microsoft Windows. The first, *Screen Antics: Johnny Castaway*, is an animated screen saver that tells the story of Johnny's survival on a deserted isle while facing sharks, mermaids and other diversions to his isolation. The second, *Take•A•Break! Crosswords*, features 375 crossword puzzles, as well as a 65-page *Dell Magazine Crosswords Directory*.



VG&CE REPLAY

JANUARY 1992: Nintendo's five-year domination of the vidgame biz comes to an end. Sega grabs 61% of the 16-bit video-gaming market after sales of its Genesis system increased by 500% in 1991. The company's spikey blue rascal also threatens to dethrone a certain plumber, as *Sonic the Hedgehog* becomes the biggest-selling cartridge for that year.

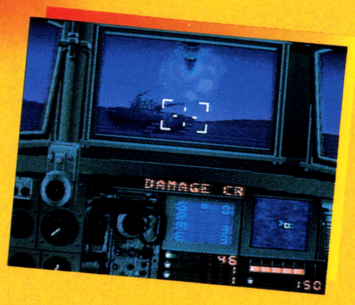
JANUARY 1990: Nintendo declares over the "chip shortage" that plagued video-gaming's previous year. Therefore, NES third-parties are allowed to engage in capitalistic anarchy and produce as many titles as the market will bear.

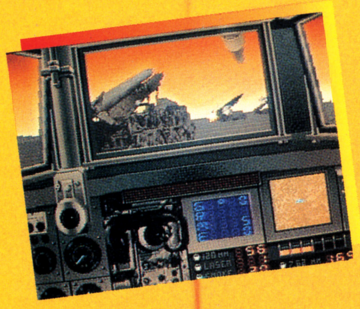
JANUARY 1984: During a commercial break, Super Bowl Sunday viewers witness the totalitarian world of George Orwell's novel *1984*, but a female runner enters an assembly hall. She hurls a hammer at the view screen of "Big Brother" and shatters it, liberating the zombie masses' minds. Director Ridley Scott's (*Blade Runner, Thelma & Louise, 1492*) million-dollar ad brings home that "1984 won't be like *1984*" because of Apple's new Macintosh computer. Sure enough, even IBMs today have a bit of the forbidden fruit, courtesy of Windows and OS/2.

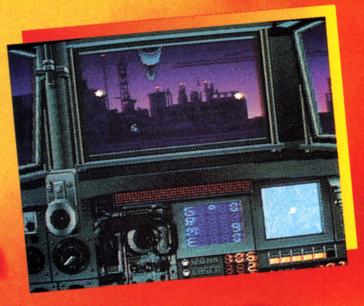
JANUARY 1982: Jerry Buckner and Gary Garcia (*who?*) hit No. 9 on *Billboard*'s Top 40 with "Pac-Man Fever," their homage to the voracious yellow one.

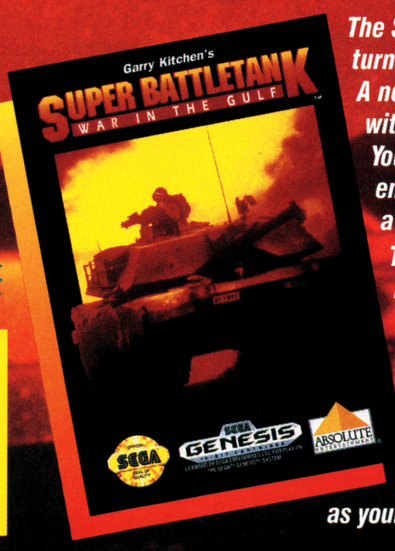
—Howard Wen

FEEL THE HEAT!









The Soviet-made T-72 tank turns toward you and fires. A near miss—its shell bursts with awesome force. You return fire and the enemy explodes in a furious blaze.

This is Operation Desert Storm. You are the commander of the M1A1 Abrams battletank—the most powerful ground assault vehicle ever built. It's up to you to search for and destroy heavily-armed enemy tanks, helicopters, SCUD launchers, and strongholds before they blow you off the map. The combat is intense, loud, and lethal. And you only have to go as far as your living room and your Super Nintendo™ or Genesis™ system to feel it.

Designed by Garry Kitchen and Alex DeMeo.
Genesis program by Mark Morris.

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OR CALL OUR TOLL-FREE NUMBER DIRECTLY

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($4.00 handling charge for each tape, applicable toward a purchase of *Super Battletank*. Ask the operator for details. Offer may be withdrawn at any time.)

SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE
Actual Genesis screens may vary.

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CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Sega, Genesis, Streets of Rage 2 and characters' names are trademarks of SEGA. © 1992 SEGA, 3375 Arden Road, Hayward, CA 94545. All rights reserved.

Head-butts,

An interview with Scott Steinberg,
product manager of Streets of Rage 2™ for Sega™ Genesis.™

kidney punches,

How is Streets of Rage 2 different from the first one?

The graphics are awesome. At 16 megs it's our biggest game. Overall there's a lot more of everything; more moves, more intricate maneuvers, more characters. And the characters are a lot bigger in size. So the action is more impactful.

uppercuts, knee-slams,

What are some of the new moves?

Axel™ has new punch combinations that do some serious damage. Blaze™ can do backflips to attack enemies in front and behind her. And there are two new players. Max™ and Skate.™ Max is an ex-wrestler with a ruthless body-slam, and Skate knocks his opponents out with flying jump kicks. He can also skate behind his opponents, jump on their shoulders and ambush them.

eye-gouges

Are there new enemies?

Lots of new enemies—a gang of motorcycle thugs, a guy with a jet-powered pack on his back, knife-fighters, ax-murderers, ex-cons, and a bunch of new martial arts experts, so there are a lot of new challenges. And the player control is different also.

and groin kicks.

How is the control different?

We've tuned the control to be much more responsive, so that the action will be a lot faster and more spontaneous. You can crack a jaw or flatten an opponent in a split second. The players are basically as fast as your reflexes will let them be. The fighting is so realistic, you actually feel tired after playing it. It's the next best thing to kicking some real you-know-what.

(Just another typical day at the Sega office.)

SEGA™
GENESIS

CIRCLE #116 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Test Your Knowledge in VG&CE and Capcom's

MEGA MAN 5

TRIVIA CONTEST

Win a Street Fighter II: Champion Edition Machine!

Mega Man has lent his name to some of the most popular video games to appear on the market, and Capcom's new *Mega Man 5* for the NES is no different. Instead of just playing to the end, however, you have to dig through it and others in the *Mega Man* library for obscure answers to the following questions:

1. **The Yashichi can only be found in one *Mega Man* adventure. Which one is it in, and in which stage can it be found?**
2. **What words flash on the wall behind the transporters in *Mega Man 2*?**
3. **What is Mega Man's serial number(from *Mega Man 3*)?**
4. **Who did Dr. Wily kidnap in *Mega Man 4*?**
5. **What do the M Tanks do in *Mega Man 5*?**
6. **Which of Rush's special adapters is not in *Mega Man 5*?**
7. **What does Protoman drop at the beginning of *Mega Man 5*?**
8. **In the beginning of the Charge Man stage in *Mega Man 5*, what track number does Mega Man appear at?**
9. **Name the eight robot masters in *Mega Man 5*.**

All questions must be answered correctly to win, and entries must be submitted on a postcard (no envelopes please). Multiple entries accepted, but each must be sent in separately. The deadline for entries is March 1, 1993, and all entries must be received by that date to be eligible.

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE One winner will receive a Street Fighter II: Champion Edition stand-up arcade game.

FIRST PRIZE Ten (10) people will each receive their choice of three NES games from Capcom's library.

SECOND PRIZE Twenty-five (25) people will each get a Mega Man 5 T-shirt.

THIRD PRIZE Twenty-five (25) people will each get one-year subscriptions to VG&CE.

Good Luck!

OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES

VG&CE and Capcom are not responsible for late or lost mail. Employees of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, of L.F.P., Inc., of Capcom, and of their subsidiaries and affiliates, are not eligible, nor are members of their immediate families. All materials submitted, including without limitation, the ideas and expression of those ideas, become the property of VG&CE and will not be returned.

No purchase necessary. For a list of the answers, send a stamped, self-addressed, business-sized envelope to *Mega Man 5* Contest Answers, c/o VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. All winners will be notified by mail.

Sixty-one (61) winners will be selected by the VG&CE judges, who shall have complete and sole discretion in selecting winners. All decisions are final. All taxes on prizes are the sole responsibility of the winners. Winners release VG&CE, L.F.P., Inc., Capcom, and their subsidiaries and affiliates in all matters relating to the use of prizes. No substitution of prizes or cash equivalent allowed. One prize per family.

Winners grant permission for use of their names, addresses and photos for advertising or promotional purposes without additional compensation. Contest void where prohibited by law, and otherwise governed by California law.

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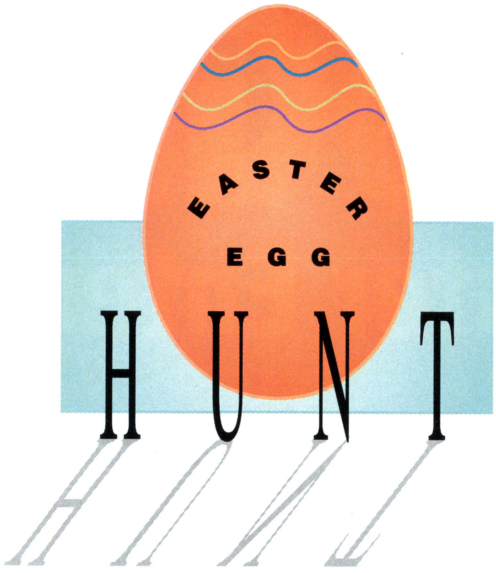
WATCH FOR IT!

CNNAW

OFFER EXPIRES MARCH 22, 1993

Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint is.

Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to: **VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt.** *The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and complete address!*



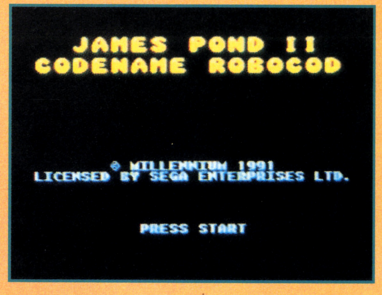
Listen up, **Super Mario Kart** *fans! You may have just read in our* **News Bits** *column that this game is currently the best-selling Super NES title. To meet the demand for tricks and techniques, we've devoted an entire section of this month's* **Easter Egg Hunt** *to this hot racing title. We've also got new cheats and codes for* **Cadash** *and* **Robocod** *and a neat trick to help Neo•Geo owners slash their way through* **Crossed Swords.** *So what are you waiting for? Dig in!*

BY
CHRIS BIENIEK

James Pond II—Codename: Robocod

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)

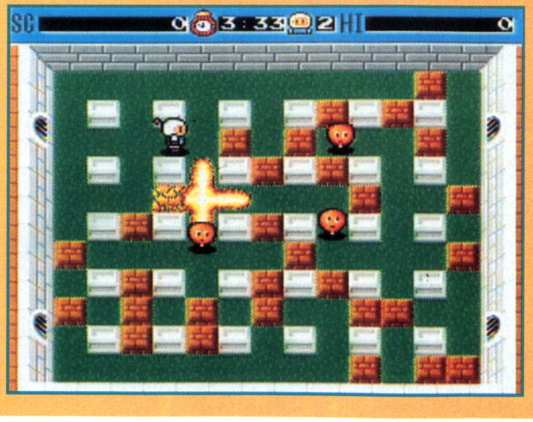
Okay...this is the last of the *Robocod* Easter eggs, we promise! At the title screen, press and hold the A and C buttons and point the control pad to the lower left. While holding those buttons down, press **START**. When you take your fingers off the buttons, you'll access a secret menu screen with stage select, sound test and control configuration options.



Three-In-One Super CD

(TTI FOR THE TURBOGRAFX-16/TURBO DUO)

If you own the three-in-one Super CD with *Gate of Thunder, Bonk's Adventure* and *Bonk's Revenge* on the same disc, try doing this trick at the title screen: Press Up, Right, Down, Left and II. You'll hear a chime, and you'll be sent to a hidden *fourth* game: It's the classic TG-16 version of Hudson Soft's *Bomberman*!

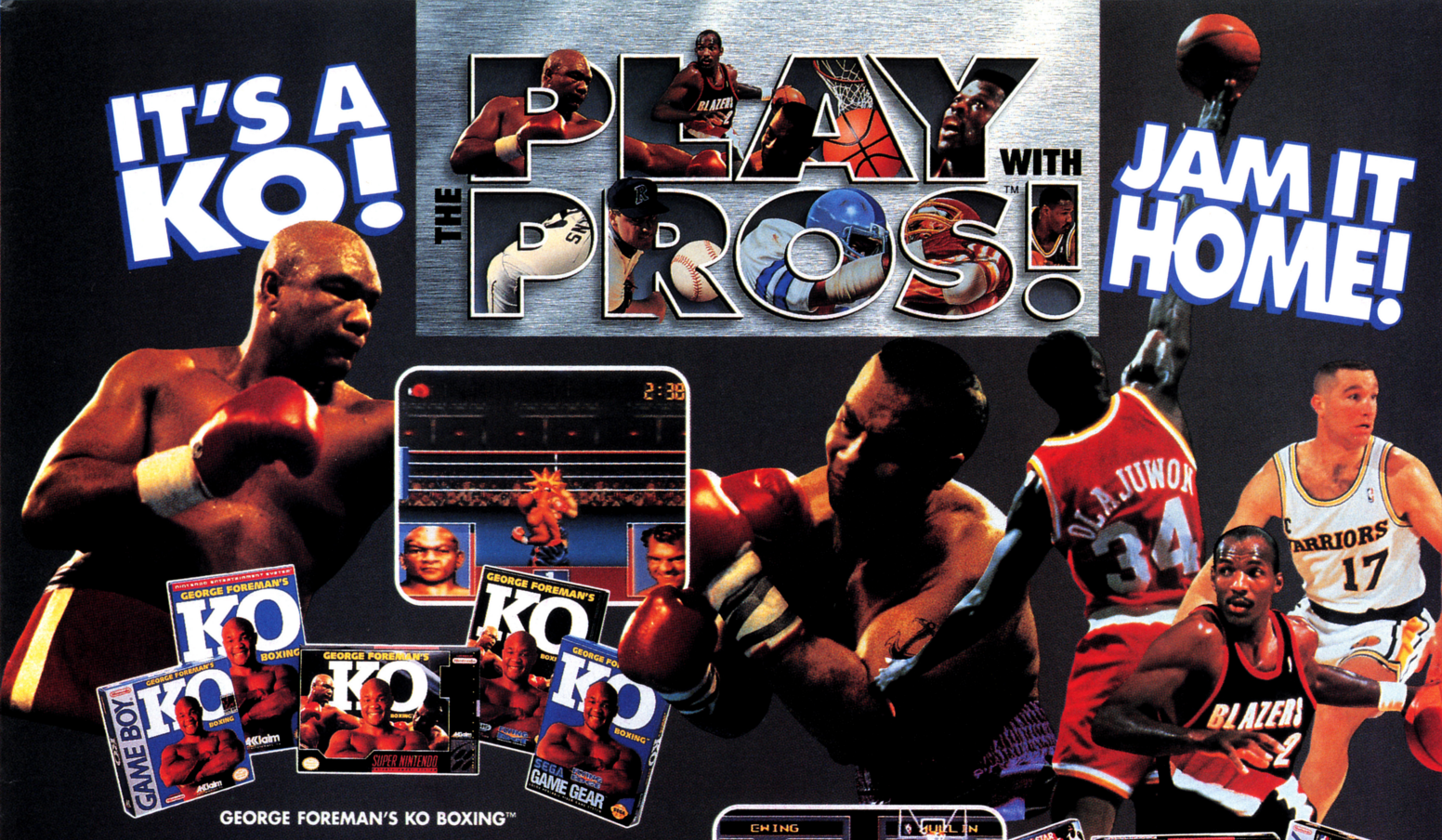


continued on page 36

IT'S A KO!

THE PLAY WITH PROS!™

JAM IT HOME!



GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO BOXING™

NBA® ALL-STAR CHALLENGE™

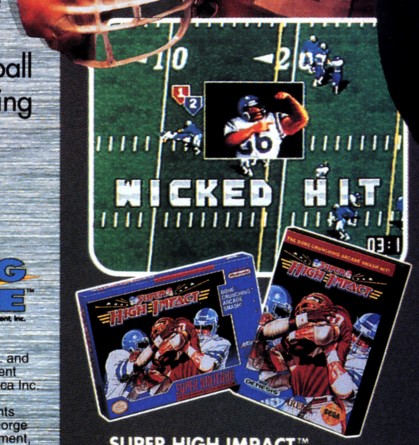
FEEL THE HEAT!

BONE-CRUNCHING!

Get ready for the hottest sports games this side of the major leagues. Feel the heat of Roger "The Rocket" Clemens with realistic over-the-shoulder fielding and interactive close-up plays. Get ready to rumble as George Foreman and show the world the power of a Big George Super Punch! Take it to the hoop with 27 NBA® All-Stars in the most intense one-on-one b-ball action! Tackle Super High Impact™ for all the bone-crunching football excitement of the arcade smash!

When you're tired of watching from the sidelines... it's time to Play with the Pros!

ROGER CLEMENS' MVP BASEBALL™



SUPER HIGH IMPACT™

Acclaim® entertainment, inc

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ARENA ENTERTAINMENT™

FLYING EDGE™ A Division of Acclaim Entertainment, Inc.

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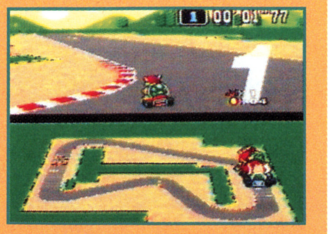
CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 34

Super Mario Kart

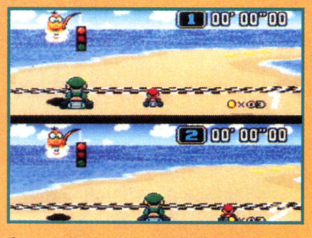
(NINTENDO FOR THE SUPER NES)

Our contacts have discovered plenty of tips and tricks for this addictive racing game. First, there's a way to get your cart to make a quick jump off the starting line in all areas of the game. To do this, you must start to rev up your engine by pressing B at a very specific point during the countdown that introduces each race, and hold it down until your cart takes off. The timing is different for each character, but the crucial point is usually immediately after the first light turns orange. It's easy to figure it out after a few tries; if your cart doesn't rocket off the starting line, you've pressed the B button too late, and if the tires squeal and kick up dust, you've pressed B too early. Check out the screen shots to see how we used this trick to rocket Bowser from the eighth pole position to first place in a 50cc-class Mushroom Cup race, even before most of the other carts have crossed the starting line!



Our own Zach Meston has pointed out that there are shortcuts in each of the "Ghost Valley" courses in the game. If you have a feather to jump high, you can skip portions of these races by jumping off the edge of the track and landing at a point that's further ahead in the race. Shown here is Mario, about to make the jump for shortcuts in the "Ghost Valley" levels in the 50cc Mushroom Cup and Flower Cup races.

Zach also reports that the "special challenge" mentioned on the last page of the *Super Mario Kart* manual is actually an all-new, extra-difficult 150cc class of races that opens up after you earn a gold trophy in the 100cc "Special Cup Race." Since the cartridge has battery-backed memory, it will "remember" that you have earned this distinction, and the 150cc class will always be available to you in the future.



VG&CE reader Marcus Jones wrote to tell us how you can handicap your character in the GP and Match Race modes. If you press Y and A at the character-select screen, your character will shrink. During the race, a "shrunken" character will be flattened if he or she comes into contact with any other driver.

Some players are still not aware of the fact that you can *throw* banana peels ahead of you instead of dropping them behind you. Just hold the control pad Up when you press A to release the banana peel, and it will sail in front of you in a high arc. Similarly, you can drop the green shells instead of shooting them if you hold the control pad in the Down position while pressing A. The shell will drop behind you and sit motionless on the track instead of bouncing off the walls.

Finally, if you complete a race in the one-player time trials *without touching any obstacles or barriers*, choose the "Replay" option to watch your performance and you'll find that you can rotate your viewpoint by using the L and R buttons on top of the controller.

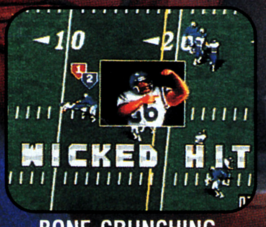
Cadash

(WORKING DESIGNS FOR THE TURBOGRAFX-16/TURBO DUO)

If you enter your name as TORU in this TG-16 hack-'n-slash adventure, you'll start the game in the cave just past the first boss character with an experience level of 20, the highest possible! This trick also works in a two-player game; just give both characters the same name.

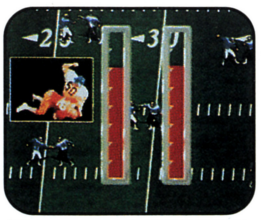
FOOTBALL ACTION SO REAL, IT'S... BONE-CRUNCHING!

AUTHENTIC ARCADE FOOTBALL ACTION!



BONE-CRUNCHING TACKLES!

OVER 30 OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE PLAYS!



SETTLE THE SCORE WITH AN ALL-OUT BRAWL!

BASED ON THE ARCADE SMASH!

SUPER HIGH IMPACT

Super High Impact for Genesis brings the fast-paced action of the **BONE-CRUNCHING** arcade smash home. Choose from 18 hard-charging teams and over 30 plays, from a red dog blitz to a never-say-die super fly. "Yer Toast" if the HIT-O-METER rates your tackle "Dweeb", but you can settle the score with an all-out team brawl!

Stop watching from the sidelines... This is football action so real... it's Bone Crunching!

ARENA ENTERTAINMENT™

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THE PLAY WITH PROS!

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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

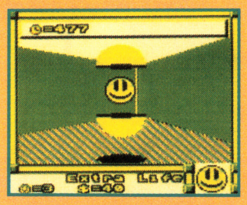
Crossed Swords

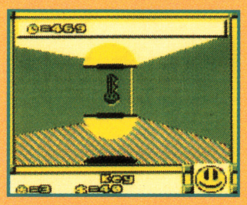
(SNK FOR THE NEO•GEO)

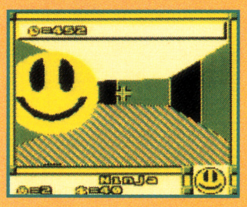
If you've been having trouble getting through this challenging game with just one continue, Tom Fulp of Perkasie, Pennsylvania, has a valuable tip for you. When your swordsman is killed in the one-player game, don't continue the game on Controller 1. Instead, pick up Controller 2 and press **START**. (If you only own one controller, you'll have to disconnect it and plug it into the second controller socket on the front of the machine before the ten-second timer expires.) Continuing as player two, you'll notice that you still have all of the items and gold that you had as player one. If you keep switching back and forth between the two controllers, you can continue as many times as you wish.

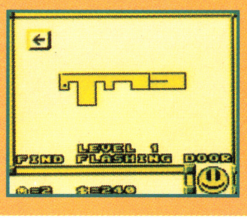
Faceball 2000

(BULLET-PROOF FOR THE GAME BOY)



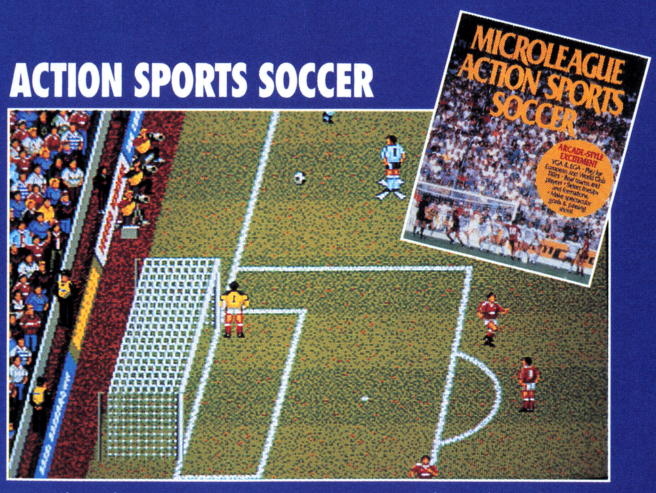






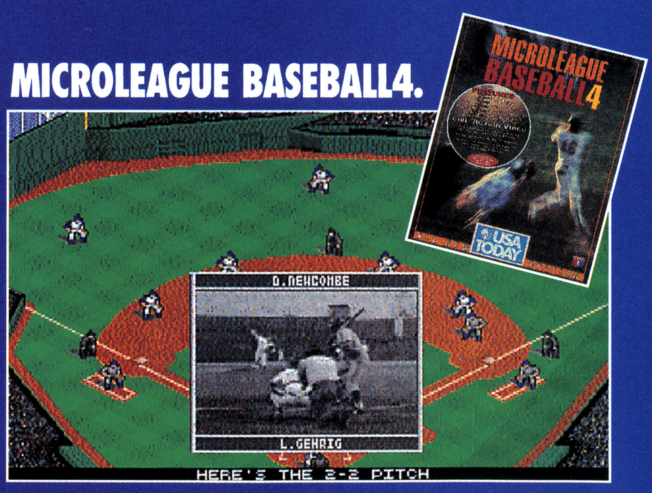
Last issue, we told you that you could shoot the exit door five times in Level 1 of *Faceball 2000*'s Cyberscape game to warp to a secret room with a speedup pod, a nine-lives pod and warp doors that lead to Levels 10, 15, 20 and 25. While you're in this secret room, shoot at the nine-lives pod three times—it will change into a key. Get the key, and the west wall of the secret room will open up to reveal another secret room! Watch out, because there's a powerful ninja in the second room. If you can get past him, you'll find another speedup pod, a Level 2 automag pod, a Level 3 armor pod and warp doors that lead to Cyberscape Levels 30, 35 and 40.

ACTION SPORTS SOCCER



Arcade-style action! European critics raved, and you will, too. Test your coordination—and your managerial skills—as you play for the European-championships. More than 170 actual clubs are included. VGA and EGA. Arcade, management and full simulation modes. Real life action: corner kicks, free kicks, trick shots. Much more! It's the best game yet for the soccer buff—and a perfect way for the novice to learn the game.

MICROLEAGUE BASEBALL4.



The newest and the greatest! Take your choice: manage 54 teams, past and present. With multimedia, digitized sound, 256-color, 3-D VGA Graphics. You control the players and all the action. More stats than ever! Plus: programmable computer manager, detailed Stadium Graphics. You can set up your schedule..."Quickplay" a season in minutes. Print out complete post-game summaries...much more! GM/Owner Disk available (separate purchase).

FOR NEW EXCITEMENT, TH

MICRO

GAME GENIE CODES

Robocop 3

(OCEAN FOR THE NES)

For use with Galoob's NES-compatible Game Genie Video Game Enhancer

ZLVGIXPP—Start with double energy

GNUNAEKN—One hit kills all enemies

GAME GENIE CODES

Two Crude Dudes

(DATA EAST FOR THE GENESIS)

For use with Galoob's Genesis-compatible Game Genie Video Game Enhancer

BEBA-AAFT—Start with nine lives (both players)

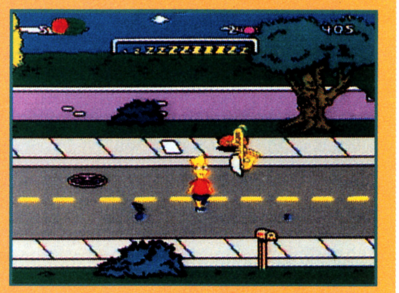
BEBA-AAFJ—Start with nine continues

A20A-AABG—Start on second half of Level 5

GAME GENIE CODES

The Simpsons: Bart's Nightmare

(ACCLAIM FOR THE SUPER NES)



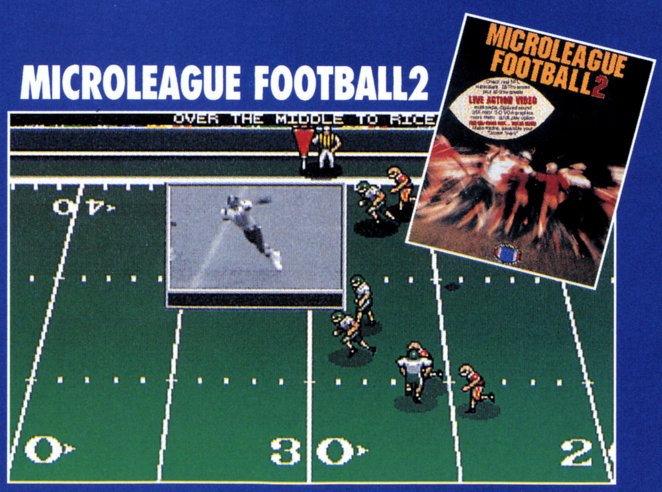
For use with Galoob's Super NES-compatible Game Genie Video Game Enhancer

89CB-D9B5—Infinite bubbles and seeds

C2BE-60EA—Infinite lives in "Bartman" and "Itchy & Scratchy" subgames

C2C3-6925+C2C3-61B5—Infinite "Zs"

MICROLEAGUE FOOTBALL2



Coach your own team, using real NFL players. 28 current teams, plus all-time greats! As close as you can get to the real thing: all the stats, real action, real strategy. 3D VGA Graphics. Digitized Video and Sound. Quickplay Option for a game or an entire season (with playoffs!). You can program different coaching profiles. Print out post-game box scores and summaries. Input new stats. And more! Free GM/Owner disk. See box at right.

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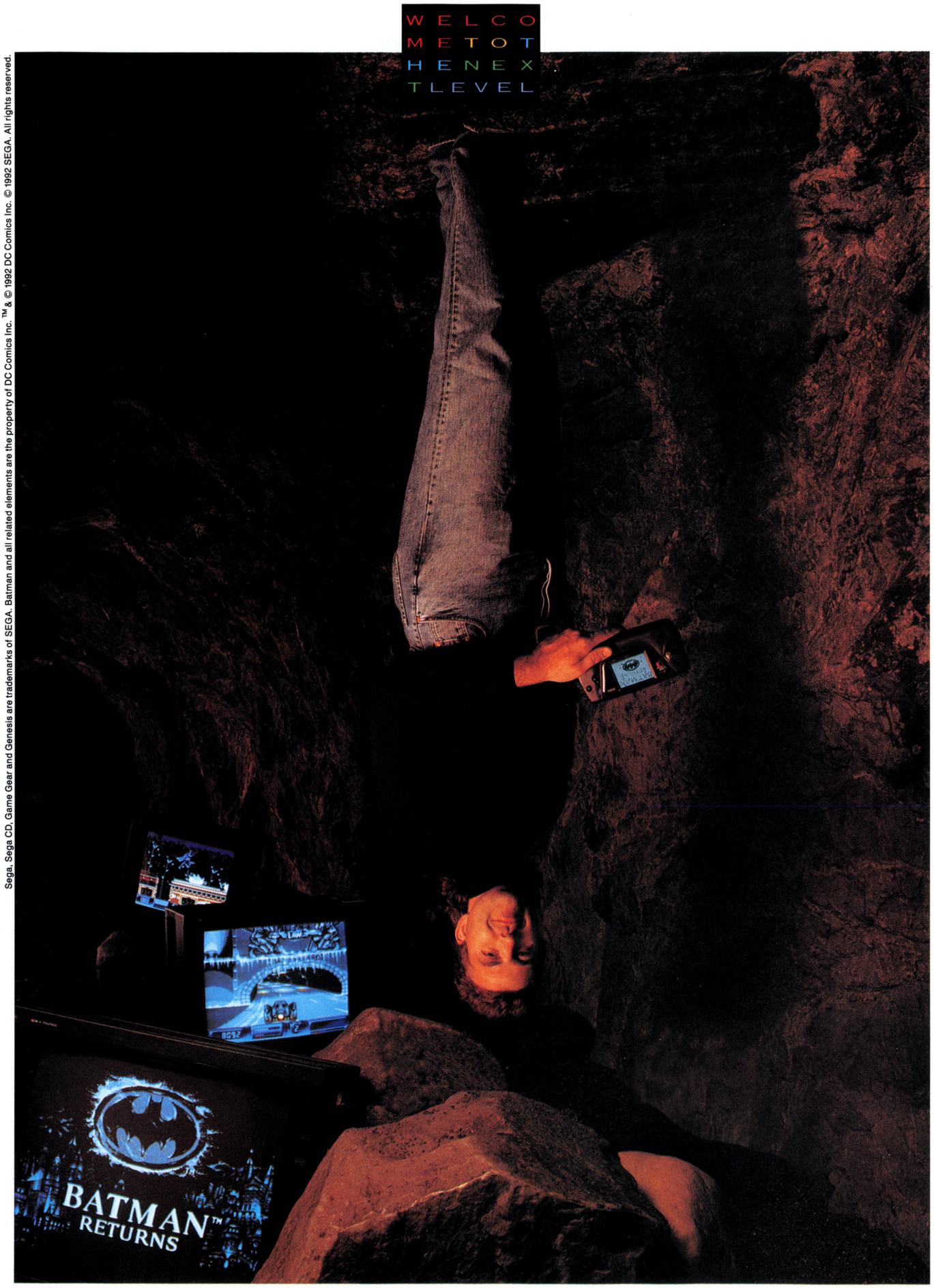
FREE GM/Owner disk ($29.95 value). Input stats, make trades between teams, even between eras. Wheel and deal. Season disks available, too. (Separate purchase.) Coming soon: Auxiliary Disk to convert pro game into college game...featuring the great college bowls!

THE NAME OF THE GAME IS LEAGUE

CIRCLE #119 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



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Unlike

An interview with Bert Schroeder, Producer of Batman™ Returns on Sega CD,™ Genesis™ and Game Gear.™

Bert's wife,

How will the new Batman Returns games be different from the previous one?

There are a lot of new weapons based on the movie, like access to the utility belt, so there's tons of cool stuff to use. And the CD version has incredible scaling and perspective. It's very realistic. For instance, it has a driving sequence with the **Batmobile,** and you're the driver.

you'll appreciate

What are your favorite parts of the game?

In Batman Returns there's a level near the end where you fight **The Penguin**'s Duckmobile. You launch all your weapons and use your wings, to jump from iceflow to iceflow. The best thing about all these games is they're never over when you think they are.

the long,

How is the music on the CD version?

Spencer Nilsen is scoring some original music. The sound is CD quality, so it's really awesome. And we're using fully digitized sound effects to help heighten gameplay. Which means that you'll feel like you're actually in the game.

hard hours

Were the games difficult to create?

Yeah, but we enjoyed it. There were some fun times. For instance, we really enjoyed being on the Warner Brothers set watching them film in **The Penguin**'s Lair. Our idea for the slanted building in the Genesis version came directly from that set. Of course, creating the games took time—more than a year—but when they come out great, it's worth it.

he's spent at the office.

SEGA™

CIRCLE #120 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

VIDEO GAME PREVIEWS

FIRST LOOK

Tecmo Super NBA Basketball

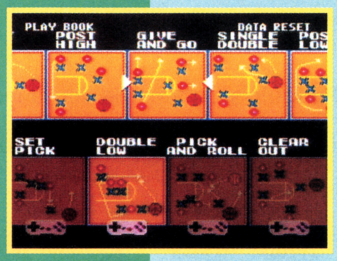
TECMO

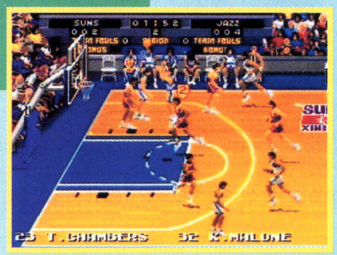
For the Super NES

AVAILABLE: FEBRUARY

Developed in the U.S., *Tecmo Super NBA Basketball* is licensed by NBA Properties Inc. and features official NBA team logos, colors and player likenesses. It's Tecmo's first Super NES title in this country.

Featuring a range of one-, two- and no-player settings, the game also features a full-season mode and lots of control configuration and playbook selections. The action on the court is complemented by close-up "cinema displays" of crucial passes and shots, and the soundtrack includes plenty of realistic sound effects and a digitized referee's voice.





Double Dragon 3—The Rosetta Stone

FLYING EDGE

For the Sega Genesis

AVAILABLE: JANUARY

The classic beat-'em-up series continues on the Genesis, where martial artists Billy and Jimmy are sent on a global wild-goose chase at the request of a fortune teller who has asked them to seek out the precious, powerful Rosetta Stone.

Like most previous installments of the *Double Dragon* saga, this Genesis update features nonstop martial arts action for one or two players. Straggling players can "buy in" as the second player in the middle of a one-player contest.

Riot City

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16/Turbo Duo

AVAILABLE: FEBRUARY

This Super CD beat-'em-up features large characters, tons of levels and a heavy, funky rock soundtrack. Not much is known about its plot at press time—suffice it to say that *Riot City* is a dyed-in-the-wool *Final Fight* clone, right down to the special moves that the fighters perform.

The latest word from TTI is that the game's title is still subject to change; *Urban Jungle* is one of the alternate names currently being considered.

Bubsy in: Claws Encounters of the Furred Kind

ACCOLADE

For the Super NES

AVAILABLE: MARCH

Created by Accolade as a Mario-style mascot, Bubsy is a spry feline with a bad attitude—one that tends to get him into more trouble than he knows how to handle. In his cartoon-quality Super NES debut, he runs and jumps through some of the most off-the-wall environments you've seen in a long time, dodging such bizarre enemies as toy trains and rolling swiss cheese.

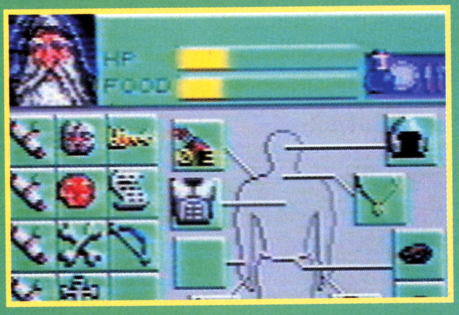
Several different play mechanics are introduced through the course of Bubsy's adventure, including one fairly long sequence in which he is carried along helplessly in the current of a wooden gutter filled with running water.

Eye of the Beholder

ATARI

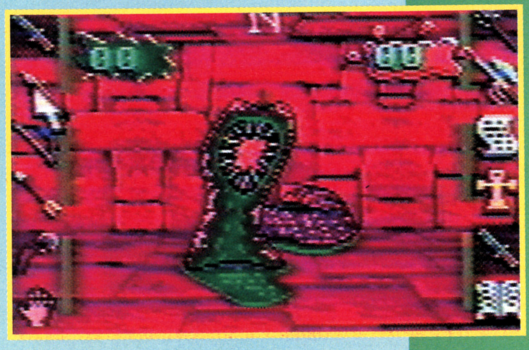
For the Atari Lynx

AVAILABLE: SPRING



Inspired by the classic *Dungeon Master*, this portable version of the popular *Eye of the Beholder* computer game brings first-person role-playing adventuring to the Lynx. Travel through dungeons with a party of up to six characters, each with its own *Dungeons & Dragons*-style attributes, weapons and magic spells.

Killing hideous creatures is only a part of your journey through *Eye of the Beholder*. There are also puzzles to solve, hidden items to discover and secret passageways that lead to deeper rooms in the dungeon. Expect this one to hit the shelves in February or March.



Tumblepop

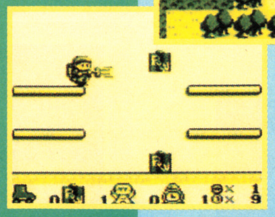
DATA EAST

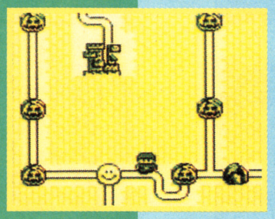
For the Nintendo Game Boy

AVAILABLE: JANUARY

Based on the comical coin-op (also from Data East), this multi-format arcade title takes place in the year 2018. It's your job to prowl the land with your trusty vacculator and capture the "strange beasties and super mutations" that have overrun the planet. Mixing *Bubble Bobble*-style action sequences with exploration scenes that are reminiscent of role-playing titles, *Tumblepop* also includes some rudimentary puzzle solving.

In addition to one- and two-player modes, the game also includes a "construction" mode in which you can design your own arcade screens and populate them with enemies for practice purposes.





King Arthur's World

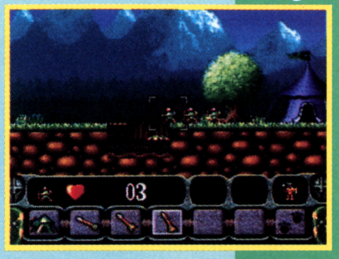
JALECO

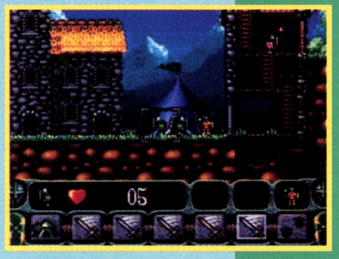
For the Super NES

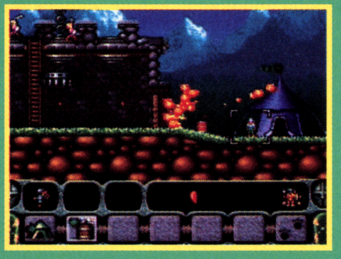
AVAILABLE: JANUARY

One of the most clever of the *Lemmings* variants on the horizon, Jaleco's *King Arthur's World* features an army of foot soldiers who walk solemnly across the plains of ancient England, mindlessly following the orders of King Arthur. They are sent on missions to invade castles, capture treasure, build catapults and perform all types of medieval tasks.

In addition to crisply digitized sound effects, *King Arthur's World* boasts a hypnotic musical score that is said to be the first SNES soundtrack to be encoded with Dolby Surround signals. It's also one of the first mouse-compatible SNES games to be released by a third-party developer.







Tiny Toon Adventures Cartoon Workshop

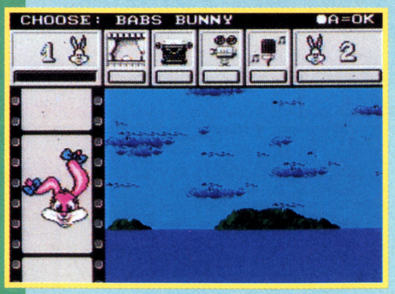
KONAMI

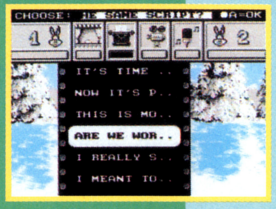
For the Nintendo Entertainment System

AVAILABLE: FEBRUARY

Not really a "game," *Cartoon Workshop* enables NES owners to create and modify their own cartoons featuring Buster Bunny, Plucky Duck, Hamton Pig and other *Tiny Toons* stars. With your control pad, you'll be able to choose backgrounds, music, props, character animation and even dialogue boxes.

Though the Game Pak includes no option to allow you to save a cartoon you've created, it's easy to play back your creation and record it on a VCR connected to your NES.





Bram Stoker's Dracula

SONY IMAGESOFT

For the Genesis with Sega CD

AVAILABLE: SPRING

Still at an extremely early stage of development, this Sega CD features live actors in full-motion video sequences, many lifted directly from Francis Ford Coppola's big-budget feature film. The rough screen shots seen here are the earliest of the game's scenes to be revealed to the press; we'll keep you up-to date with more information about *Bram Stoker's Dracula* as soon as it becomes available.

Sengoku II

SNK

For the Neo•Geo

AVAILABLE: JANUARY

Though this eagerly anticipated sequel had not yet appeared in the arcades as we went to press with this issue, SNK wanted our readers to sneak a peek at *Sengoku II*, the second chapter in the otherworldly fighting game series for the Neo•Geo.

The first *Sengoku* adventure is considered by most of the Japanese game magazines to be one of the finest examples of the capabilities of the Neo•Geo system, so it'll be interesting to see how SNK tries to top the original game's hauntingly atmospheric graphics and sounds.

Tyrants

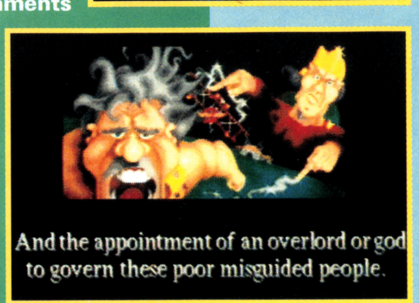
VIRGIN

For the Sega Genesis

AVAILABLE: FEBRUARY

Originally developed by the U.K.'s Sensible Software for the Atari ST and Amiga under the name *Mega lo Mania*, this curious strategy game includes elements of both *Populous* and *SimCity*—but with a decidedly British dry sense of humor. As a demigod locked in a power struggle between deities who seek control of a newly discovered world, you must seize chunks of land and fortify them with troops to do battle with neighboring castles, cities and continents.

Lots of digitized comments are heard as you manage the countryside into glory or oblivion, as well as animated sequences that show the results of your actions. Deploy troops, rearrange terrain or alter the passage of time—it's your world.



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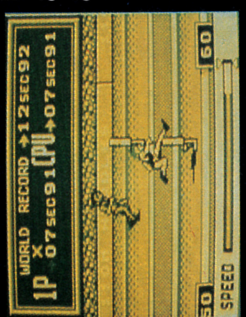

CIRCLE #121 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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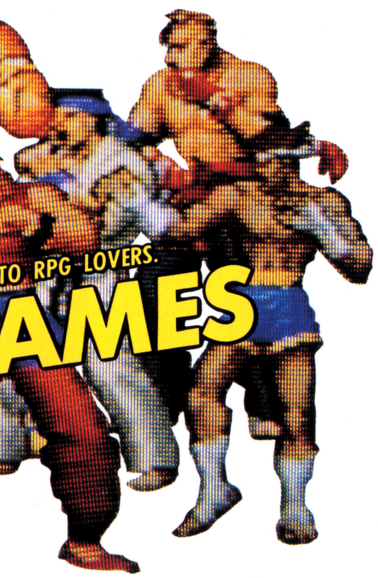

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CIRCLE #122 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

T2 JUDGMENT DAY

FROM THE THEATER TO THE ARCADE AND INTO YOUR LIVING ROOM

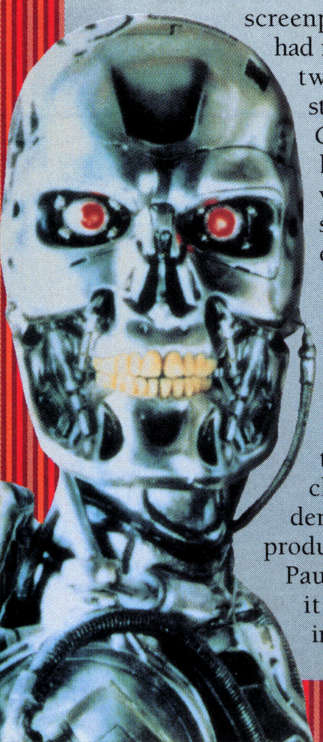
BY CRAIG E. ENGLER

There was no question from the start that *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (the movie) would generate a host of video-game spin-offs. Carolco had a success on its hands the moment it signed James Cameron to write, produce and direct the film. Video-game companies saw great potential in the big-name, high-visibility property. For Carolco, it was just a matter of finding the right developers and seeing how far they would go with the movie.

Acclaim Entertainment was one of the companies interested in *T2*, and it had an inside track. Acclaim knew *T2* was in the works even before a script had been completed, and it expressed an interest in the video-game rights early on. Dan Simon, then-president of licensing for Carolco, had worked with Acclaim on other projects, and he liked both the company's creative edge and its marketing savvy. With arcade specialist Williams in on the offer as the coin-op developer, the three companies quickly struck a deal and went to work.

STEP 1: THE SEALED ROOM

Filming was still a long way off when representatives from both Williams and Acclaim flew to Los Angeles for a look at Cameron's first-draft screenplay. The public had no idea what plot twists *T2* had in store for them, and Carolco wanted to keep things that way. Only after signing nondisclosure forms were the gaming reps allowed to enter a sealed room where they could read through the script. Acclaim's vice-president of creative and product development, Paul Samulski, said it was like entering a locked vault. Taking notes or even reading aloud was out of the question.



Despite the unusual conditions, after looking through the script one time, the designers from Williams knew *T2* could be turned into an awesome arcade game. Supervisor of video software development, George Petro, said he was excited after reading the screenplay. He and the other Williams reps were already coming up with ideas and options for an entirely new type of game, and they hadn't even seen the storyboards or illustrations yet.

"Basically, the first draft of the script had just been handed down," Petro said. "We read the script, and immediately afterward we decided this was it. This was really cool."

Since the plan was to introduce the various *T2* games as close to the movie release date as possible, Acclaim started to develop a home version of the movie, while Williams worked on the coin-op. Acclaim owned first crack at the video-game rights to anything Williams created, so it decided to see how the arcade game turned out before committing to a conversion. This way it had time to get its own *T2* game into the stores. If the arcade version turned out to be a hit, Acclaim could bring it to a home platform later—but it would all depend on what Williams came up with.

STEP 2: THE IDEA

Concepts for a *T2* coin-op were easy to come by. The movie lent itself to a certain play mechanic, and Williams knew that somehow it would involve guns. Rather then end up with an *Operation Wolf* clone, Petro said it was decided to make a gun game that would redefine the genre and set new standards for the entire industry. Marketing Director Roger Sharpe said the plan from the outset was to make *T2* a showcase product.

Because an important part of the game's tie-in to the movie would be its mood, the designers looked for cues within the script to give them direction. Oddly, they were helped in part by two of the arcade game's predecessors, which had brief roles in the film.

"The arcade scene from the movie specified two arcade games," Sharpe explained. "One was *Missile Command* and one was *Afterburner*. It wasn't as if somebody picked those two games out of the air."

With that direction, the Williams group came up with an idea that turned a two-gun coin-op into a first-person, interactive adventure, albeit a linear one. The game would follow the basic plot of the movie, and it would rely heavily on digitized footage, like an earlier Williams success, *Narc*. After they had the preliminary concept down, Sharpe said his people flew back to Los Angeles and broached the idea to Carolco.

"Basically, what we had done was go in with a presentation. What we were told at best was going to be a 20-minute meeting turned into a 2½ hour meeting. Cameron instantaneously said, 'You guys are doing movies. You're doing the same thing we are.' From that point, it was basically carte blanche."

The concept game was firmed up with a visit to Cameron's production company, Lightstorm, where everybody got a look at some of the visuals that would be used in the movie. There were a few problems to be worked out, but Carolco was impressed and willing to give Williams whatever it needed to

go ahead. At that point, the movie itself was just going into production. So the arcade crew began developing its game as Cameron filmed *T2*.

STEP 3: MOVIE WITHIN A MOVIE

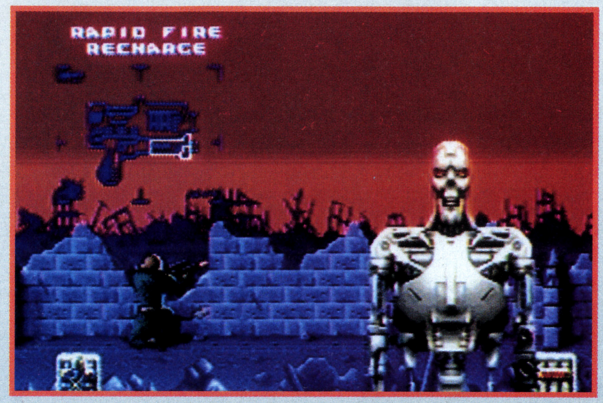
Although there is an impressive amount of digitized footage in the arcade game, none of it came from the movie. Williams either needed different shots, different angles or different sequences from the actors, so it simply filmed its own scenes. With the movie crew's schedule and location always in hand, the arcade group tagged along. When the actors weren't on the set working with Cameron, they were borrowed by the supervisor of video art and animation, Jack Haeger, who took the footage for the arcade game.

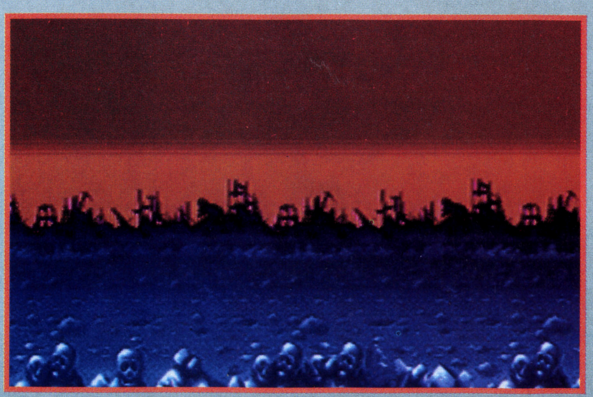
"All of that footage is stuff they (the actors) did just for us," Haeger said. "I had to set up a room with my own camera, my own lighting and my own equipment." His work was so comprehensive, Haeger said the actors told him, "With six of you, you're doing what it takes hundreds of us and millions of dollars to do."

Shooting scenes for a game based on a movie which itself had just begun filming posed some problems for Haeger. Because he didn't know what the programmers would need, he took endless shots of the actors from every possible angle and in every possible position. There was a similar problem with voice-overs, and Arnold Schwarzenegger spent quite a bit of time on a soundstage so Williams could get tracks for the arcade game and a pinball version it was also developing. "The joke was that Arnold probably did more dialogue for our two games than he did for the movie," Sharpe said.

Another problem with shooting was props, and in that area Haeger made a contribution, if a small one, to the film. While many elements of the movie would find their way into the arcade game, at the time Williams was doing its work, some props and costumes had yet to be designed. For the future Los Angeles scenes that involve human soldiers, Haeger created his own combat outfit so he could take footage for the game. Cameron's crew was impressed with what Haeger came up with, and they based the costumes that appear in the movie on his work.

Acclaim decided to make the Genesis version of *T2* an accurate reproduction rather than a translation with modifications.





STEP 4: THE ARCADE GAME

While film was being shot and soundtracks were being recorded on the set, programmers and other personnel worked at Williams' home offices in Illinois. There, *T2: The Arcade Game* took shape as code was tweaked and finishing touches were put on the twin, pulsating guns. By the time Williams was done, Acclaim already had a keen interest in the project and was ready to take a long look.

If there was no question that the movie version of *T2* would be turned into a video game, there could certainly be no question about *T2* in arcade form. It had become the showcase Sharpe envisioned at the outset, and it was also the hot game at arcades across the country. Everybody knew the property was headed for the home, and the only decision needed to be made was which platform would be first. As Petro put it, "We knew it was going to be so cool that there was going to be a home game."

Associate Producer Michael Arkin from Acclaim found out about *T2* when it made a local stir. "One day my friend dragged me to this pool hall in Queens and said, 'You have to come and play this game,' " he recalled. "I said, 'God, that was amazing. We (Acclaim) really have to do this game.' "

STEP 5: T2 MEETS THE MENACER

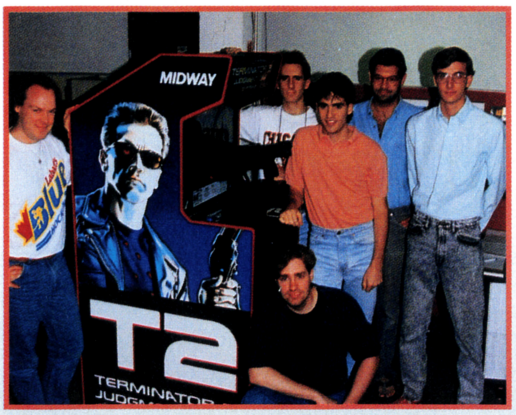
Back at the Long Island offices of Acclaim, Samulski explained the decision to release a home version of the arcade game even though Acclaim had its own title. "If it was just a mediocre game, yeah, we would have passed on

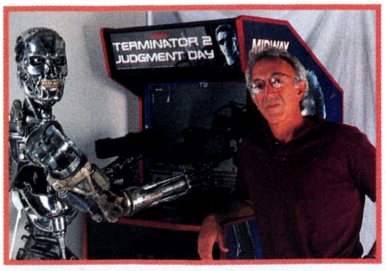
it," he said. "We felt, because it was so strong, it wouldn't get in the way of our other games. It made the cut with us only because it was so good."

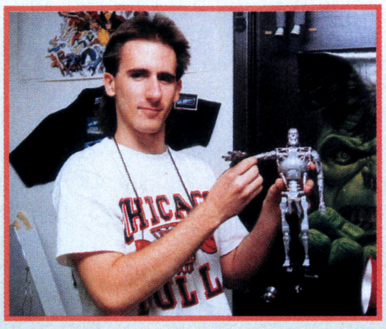
The first home version of *T2: The Arcade Game* was released for the Game Boy, but Acclaim knew its best market for the conversion would be the console systems and their light gun add-ons. Although there was already a gun available and on the market for the SNES, Acclaim cut a deal with Sega, which was ready to introduce its own gun, the Menacer.

"There are a lot of decisions that are made based on various things," Samulski said. "One of the big reasons we ended up going to Genesis with this and following it up with the SNES conversion was because of Sega's strong interest."

Sega's interest extended to a deal that would include *T2* as part of the Menacer package. Acclaim released the title separately for the Genesis at first, while Sega packaged its own cart with the gun. However, Samulski said eventually *T2* will ship with the Menacer, an arrangement he hopes will work out well for both companies. With those important details over, and with a production schedule set, all that was left was converting the game from coin-op to cartridge format.







Clockwise from top: The Williams arcade design team; a T2 endoskeleton with its "dad," Stan Winston, *T2* movie-effects wiz; video artist John Vogel with a friend; project leaders Jack Haeger and George Petro, holding German game awards.

Acclaim does none of its programming in-house, so Samulski had to decide which outside software company to use. Conversions are more straightforward than original games, but *T2* was a complex coin-op and demanded a special touch. There was no chance of converting the game perfectly, and Acclaim wanted to use someone who could be creative while remaining true to the original. It was an easy matter to select Probe Software Limited, one of the bigger European houses located in the United Kingdom. Probe had a good track record with both translations and conversions, and Samulski said he knew they could do the job.

"They had a lot of depth," he said. "Very talented people all the way down. And we knew that they were *T2* fanatics."

STEP 6: TRANSLATION OR CONVERSION?

At Acclaim, Arkin's job was to oversee production of the video game and decide in which direction to take it. He worked closely with Probe, reviewing each stage of work and adding his own comments and ideas. The first step of production was to get a copy of the actual coin-op, plus documented source code, including graphics and sound files. After that was safely shipped to Probe's offices in England, Arkin settled down to play the arcade game through again and again. While it was tough to convince coworkers his playing was part of the job, Arkin said he needed the experience to learn the subtleties of the game.

After discovering *T2* was a near-perfect arcade game, Arkin decided the

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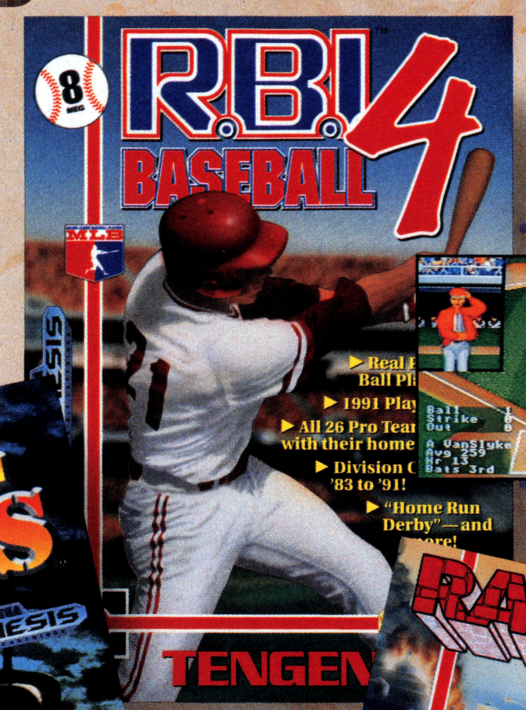

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CIRCLE #124 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

only hope of making the cartridge better would be to make it as accurate a reproduction as possible. Rather than a translation with liberal modifications, *T2* was going to be a conversion, faithful to the original. "In this case, which is not necessarily the rule for arcade conversions, because I felt the arcade game was almost perfection, I felt very, very confident just keeping my game true to the arcade game."

Unfortunately, *T2* was a 32-megabyte coin-op squeezed into an 8-megabit cart, so a lot of the sound could not be used. The film footage, which had been so painstakingly shot, didn't fair much better. "Of course, there are always things that you're technically unable to do," Arkin said. "We handled that (the animated footage) a really easy way. Let me tell you how we handled that. Gone. It was pretty easy to decide that that was going to go."

Once Probe knew what it had to do, Arkin's job became a matter of sitting back and waiting. "At this point, really, there's a programmer off in a room somewhere in England and I'm just waiting for them," he said. "I would get the first stage and comment on it with pages and pages of notes. Probe would read it and say what they could and could not do. As a conversion, my involvement is really more like a watchdog. In this case, it's just play it, play the arcade game, compare it, send a fax."

STEP 7: PROBE GOES TO WORK

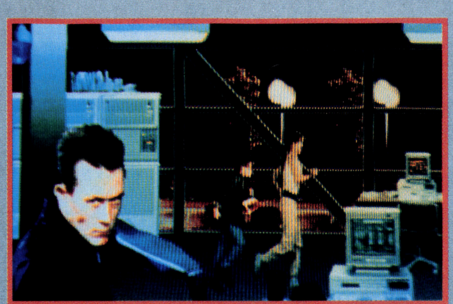
Although documented source code is considered a necessity for conversions, Probe owner Fergus McGovern said it isn't overly useful for programming. Since arcade and cartridge systems are written in entirely different languages for entirely different machines, the real use source code has is looking into fine play mechanics or picking up the nuances of a game. The most important ingredient Probe needed was the coin-op itself and the accompanying graphics files. (McGovern said Probe has translated games working from only an arcade board, where they had to build the coin-op first just to get a look at it.)

Once *T2* was in the office, McGovern and his group went to work. As with Arkin, the first priority was playing the coin-op until they were impossibly familiar with it. Even hardened gamers would have cringed at the time Probe members put into learning *T2*. "We did actually spend hours and hours and hours playing it," McGovern said. "We played it maybe 30 times from beginning to end. Nobody will beat our high scores, that's for sure."

The next step was sorting through each of the game's graphic frames and deciding which ones could and could not be used. In the end, McGovern said Probe developers re-created many of the screens themselves, rather than touching them up, because it was quicker. In fact, after looking at the arcade game, the programmer was sent off by himself to create *T2* all over again, this time for the Genesis.

"With *T2* we had a fairly tight development schedule, and it really didn't leave too much opportunity to sit down and learn the source code," McGovern said. "We re-created the game completely from scratch. On *T2*, the game was written by one programmer."

Acclaim had many obstacles to overcome in squeezing a 32-megabyte coin-op into an 8-megabit cartridge.



When Probe finished *T2* for the Genesis about six months later, it had created a game faithful to the original but slimmer. While animated scenes make the arcade version the equivalent of an interactive movie, *T2* (the video game) used that space for play mechanics because of limited memory. Despite its lack of cutting-edge animation, the Genesis version of *T2* retained all the play value of the original. McGovern said it is a success that will carry over when the SNES version is complete. After handing a beta-tested EPROM to Acclaim, Probe moved on to its next project.

STEP 8: THE FINISHED PRODUCT

With the conversion of a hot arcade game in hand and a deal with Sega and the Menacer in the wings, Acclaim said it was getting ready to sign off on its latest video game. Throughout the process, Samulski had operated as a liaison with Williams and Carolco as both companies exercised their approval rights. Cameron and Schwarzenegger also had rights that they pursued as a matter of contract. It was time to get everyone's final approval.

Simon, now president of his own company, The Licensing Group, explained, "I reserve an approval, and then final approval is reserved for Lightstorm, Jim Cameron's company, and, of course, Arnold himself." As an idea of what's involved in the process, Simon pointed to Schwarzenegger's right of final approval on any image of himself. There is no likeness in any of the games "that he hasn't touched, felt, smelled or made his opinion known on."

Samulski admitted getting approvals can be onerous, especially since they extend to advertising, instruction manuals, boxes and anything else involved with the game. However, once all the licensing agreements were honored, it was time to put away the EPROMS and move on to another game. Samulski said the next time anybody sees the cart version of *T2: Judgment Day...The Arcade Game* will be when it's ready to ship to stores. Even the final product he gets will be exactly what ends up in a gamer's home—though he'll get it earlier than everybody else. "We will see it once it goes into production, and we'll get the first few pieces off the line." And then it's on to the next game.

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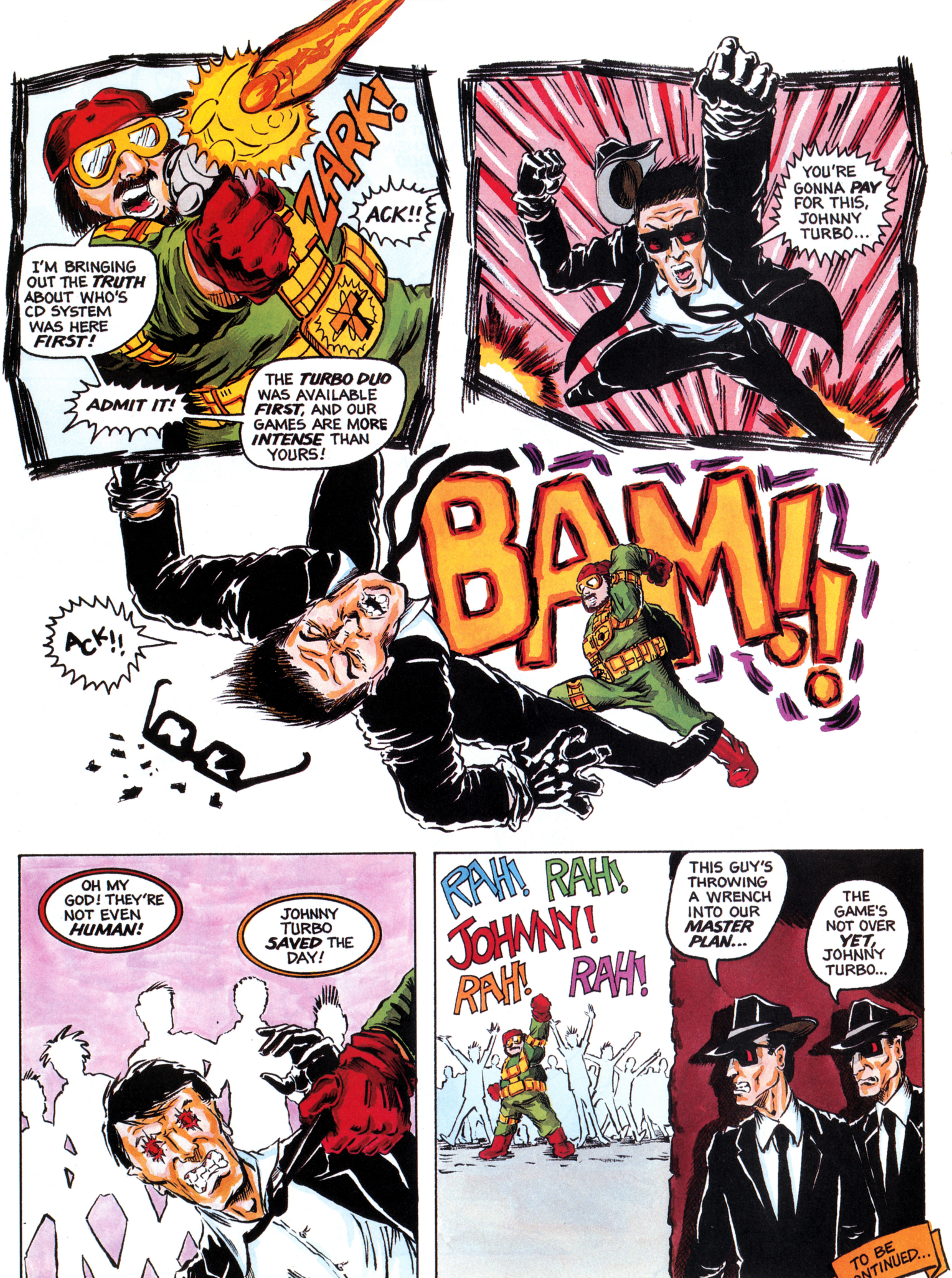
CD SYSTEMS
"...FEKA'S NEW CD GAME SYSTEM, WHICH THEY CLAIM TO BE THE FIRST AND ONLY SYSTEM OF ITS KIND, IS CAUSING QUITE A COMMOTION DOWNTOWN..."
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS, TONY!!
THEY KEEP SAYING THAT THEIR GAME SYSTEM IS THE FIRST AND ONLY SYSTEM OF ITS KIND!! BUT IT'S NOT! THE TURBO DUO WAS AVAILABLE BEFORE FEKA'S WAS...
AND TURBO DUO'S CD GAMES ARE MUCH MORE INTENSE THAN FEKA'S...
EXACTLY! THEY'VE GOT EVERY KID IN THIS CITY CONVINCED THAT THE FEKA CD GAME SYSTEM IS THE ONLY ONE IN TOWN.
WELL, IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO TO STOP THEM?
I'M NOT SURE, BUT I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING TO LOOSEN THEIR GRIP ON THE MINDS OF THE PUBLIC...
OUT IN THE STREETS, KIDS ARE FLOCKING TO BUY WHAT THEY THINK IS THE FIRST CD GAME SYSTEM AVAILABLE...
...YES, KIDS, THAT'S RIGHT. OUR SYSTEM IS THE FIRST EVER CD GAME SYSTEM ON THE MARKET.
WE'LL EVEN GIVE YOU SOME FREE CD GAMES.
FEKA

CIRCLE #126 ON READER SERVICE CARD.


I'M BRINGING OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT WHO'S CD SYSTEM WAS HERE FIRST!
ZARK!
ACK!!
ADMIT IT!
THE TURBO DUO WAS AVAILABLE FIRST, AND OUR GAMES ARE MORE INTENSE THAN YOURS!
YOU'RE GONNA PAY FOR THIS, JOHNNY TURBO...
BAM!!
ACK!!
OH MY GOD! THEY'RE NOT EVEN HUMAN!
JOHNNY TURBO SAVED THE DAY!
RAH! RAH! JOHNNY! RAH! RAH!
THIS GUY'S THROWING A WRENCH INTO OUR MASTER PLAN...
THE GAME'S NOT OVER YET, JOHNNY TURBO...
TO BE CONTINUED...

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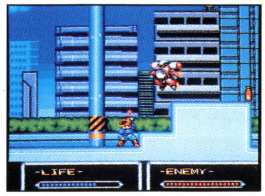
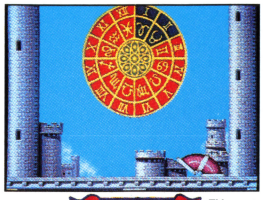


SHOCKMAN ™

Experience high voltage action as you cruise through the city and under the ocean to take on squids and transformer-type creatures. You'll be electrified by the great soundtrack on this high energy shooter.



SOMER ASSAULT ™

Whoever created this game is a few coils short of a slinky. You control a gun toting, worm-like object that flops along walls, floors and ceilings. Travel through twelve levels of ancient architecture and surrealistic surroundings as you try to conquer the evil sorceress.

SAMURAI-GHOST ™

You're a dead samurai. And if that's not bad enough, you've been woken up from your eternal slumber by some old witch to do battle with your clan's enemies. In this hauntingly spooky setting, slash your way past snarling dragons, disembodied hands and flaming skulls.

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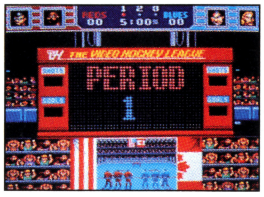
Get some serious hang time with the hottest new hero of the video screen, Zonk. Soar through five different levels of intense action. And enlist one of Zonk's demented cyborgian friends to help you in your quest to defeat the evil King Drool.



HIT THE ICE ™

First, hit the ice. Then hit your opponent into the boards. Then hit the puck into the net. You can take your team through the championship tournament, or face off in a penalty shooting contest. All in all, this game will be a big hit.

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The streets of New York City need to be cleaned up, and you've got the broom. In this arcade hit from Taito, slide behind the wheel of your own supercharged Chase 9284 patrol car. Race through the streets of New York City until you locate the fugitive, and then ram his car so you can make your arrest.

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System owned : NES__ SNES__ Genesis__ TG-16__
Turbo Express__ Turbo Duo__
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CIRCLE #127 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

Superman

SUNSOFT

For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Question: How do you design a challenging video game around a comic-book character with the powers and abilities of a demigod? Answer: Pretend that most of those powers and abilities don't exist, regardless of the fact that *everyone* who plays the game will notice their absence.

This has been done with every video-game interpretation of the Man of Steel, from First Star Software's ancient Commodore 64 title to the recent coin-op, and Sunsoft's game is no exception. The difference is that this version of *Superman* is more playable than all the previous *Superman* games put together.

Not that the game play is particularly original. This five-level contest pits Superman against three of his lesser-known foes: the Prankster, Metallo and Brainiac. Each level combines several run-jump-punch sequences (called "ground stages") and scrolling shoot-'em-up sequences (called "flying stages") in a manner similar to Sunsoft's other Genesis superhero game, *Batman*.

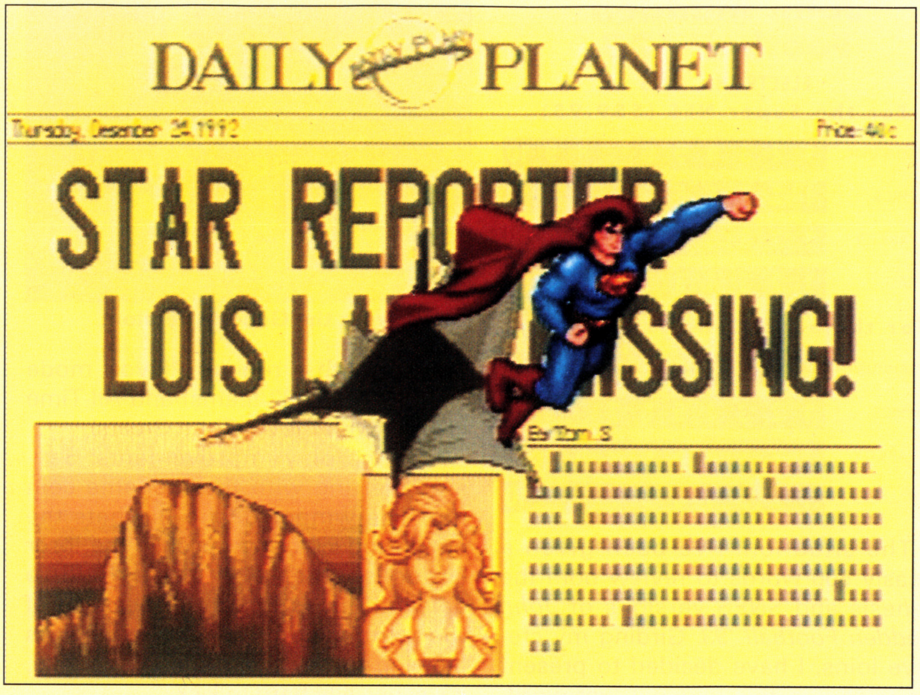
In the ground stages, you can't fly(!), but you can walk, run, jump and punch. You can also use the wicked Sonic Punch, a superstrong blow that does lots of damage but takes time to recharge. By picking up the appropriate power-up item, you switch from the Sonic Punch to the Hyper Spin, which allows you to burrow through the earth and into the next portion of a level. (No, you can't have both powers at once.)

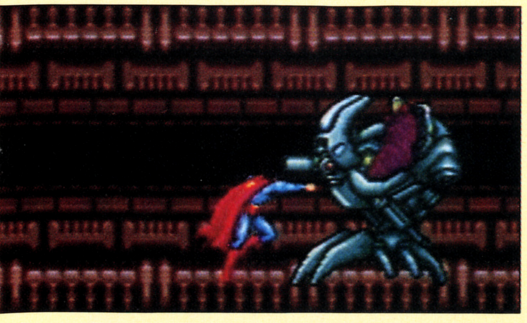
Getting through the ground stages means knowing when to switch back and forth between the two powers. For example, some doors are so tough that only the Sonic Punch can smash through them, and you simply can't go any further in some levels unless you have the Hyper Spin. (I learned this the hard way; during one game, I picked up the Sonic Punch when I needed the Hyper Spin, which I'd already picked up earlier. Therefore, I was totally stuck and had to reset. Sunsoft assured me that this will *not* happen in the final version, and that you'll always be able to get the power-up you need.)

In the flying stages, Superman can punch or use Heat Vision. Like the Sonic Punch, Heat Vision takes time to recharge; unlike the Sonic Punch, you can use Heat Vision continuously, but the beams are weak when you fire rapidly, and some enemies have to be hit with full-power beams to be destroyed.

Sunsoft has done an okay job of rationing Superman's powers, although not being able to fly during the ground stages is just plain silly. When I jumped for—and missed—a power-up in one of the ground stages, I muttered, "Gee, too bad I can't fly." (Yeah, I'm one of those players who talks to himself when he screws up.)

And speaking of screwing up, you can't be doing much of it if you want to make any progress. Sunsoft has turned the Man of Steel into a man of aluminum—about a dozen hits and you're dead. Energy-restoring power-ups are almost nowhere to be found, and you only have one life, which means you have to play perfectly to get through each level. You have two continues, but they place you at the beginning of the last level you reached, not from where you died. Extra continues can





be earned by scoring big points (which means attacking enemies and risking damage).

I personally don't mind the high degree of challenge, but Sunsoft should have allowed the player to select his or her own difficulty. Most Genesis games have multiple difficulty levels; heck, even *Batman* allows you to alter the difficulty level.

Superman's graphics are bright, colorful and detailed. Superman himself is a well-defined sprite, and he runs, jumps and flies—*when* he flies—very fluidly. Leave him standing still for a few moments and he takes on the classic Superman pose: fists on hips, elbows out, cape gently flapping in the breeze. (It's kinda weird when the cape is flapping indoors, though.)

The in-game music is upbeat and catchy, which is fortunate, since there's no way to turn it off. The sound effects do the job, but won't amaze you.

Whoever at DC Comics decided to kill off the Man of Steel should be thwacked on the head repeatedly, but whoever at Sunsoft designed this game should be congratulated. It's fun to look at, easy to play and hard to beat—just the way I like 'em. If you can deal with Sunsoft's wimp-ization of the Man of Steel, you'll get plenty of fun from this cart.

—Zach Meston

Sunsoft
11165 Knott Ave.
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 891-4500

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Everyone seemed to have a problem with *Superman*'s difficulty level being too high. Chris had hoped for something more like Sunsoft's Genesis *Batman*.

John Madden Football '93

ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Super NES ($59.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							7			
GRAPHICS							7			
PLAYABILITY								8		
OVERALL								8		

For the Sega Genesis ($59.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC								8		
GRAPHICS								8		
PLAYABILITY									9	
OVERALL									9	

The situation: I've been given a measly 500 words to review both the Genesis and SNES versions of *John Madden Football '93*. Girding my creative loins, I have decided to present the review in this unusual (yet word-efficient) format.

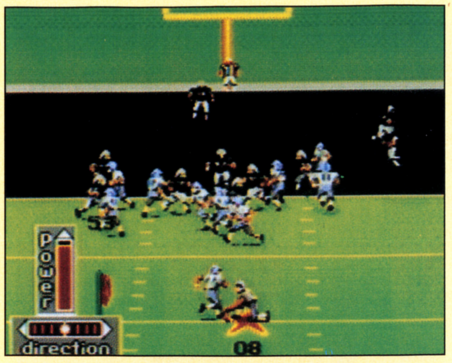
• Who John Madden is: Boisterous former head coach of the Oakland Raiders turned network color commentator. Popularized the electronic chalkboard ("telestrator"). Yells "Boom!" a lot. Does commercials for a certain hardware store chain with a certain helpful hardware man.

• Previous versions of *John Madden Football*: *JMF* and *JMF '92* for the Genesis (outstanding) and *JMF* for the Super NES (boggled the mind with its lameness).

• First impressions of *JMF '93*: Good. The game starts with a snazzy intro sequence, then cuts to the title screen, featuring a digitized John Madden excitedly waving his arms, then cuts to the Game Set-Up screen, where you choose your game mode, teams, quarter length, field type and weather.

JMF '93 is stocked with more teams than previous versions: 28 teams with stats from the 1991-92 season, eight "All-Time Great Teams" (San Francisco '84 and Miami '72, among others) and two "All-Madden Teams."

Shots from the Genesis version.



There's both a regular Playoff mode (with the 1991-92 teams) and All-Time Playoff (with the All-Time Greats).

• Game play improvements: Several, starting with the pregame coin flip. The winner of the flip gets the option to kick off or receive; the loser chooses which end of the field to defend. This is important because of the wind factor; when the wind is blowing toward your end of the field, it's especially hard to kick.

The next improvement is the split-screen play-calling mode. In previous versions of *JMF*, both offensive and defensive plays were displayed at the top of the screen. Now they're displayed at the top and bottom of the screen, making it harder to see your opponent's plays.

Speaking of plays, there's a new play and a new type of offense. The new play is QB Stop Clock, where the QB gets the snap and spikes the ball into the ground to stop the clock. The new offense is the hurry-up offense, which keeps the defense from bringing in new players.

• Graphic improvements: Minor. Most noticeable are the extra player animations—clothesline tackles, shoestring catches, helmet-butting and taunting (where a defensive player points menacingly at an offensive player).

• Differences between the two versions: Few. The Genesis version has battery backup, a 16-team playoff mode and about a dozen speech samples of Madden saying witty things like,

"That's the way to hit 'em!" The SNES version has no battery, an eight-team playoff mode and no Madden samples.

• The verdict: *John Madden Football '93* is quite possibly the best sports game of all time. The Genesis version has smoother game play and the added bonus of the Madden sound samples, but both versions ooze with playability. Now all they need to do is add NFL player rosters. Maybe in *JMF '94*?

—Zach Meston

Electronic Arts
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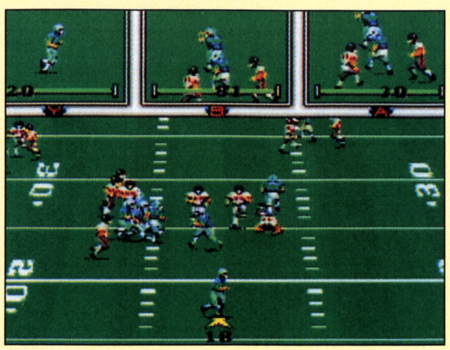
EDITORS' CORNER

Super NES

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE										
CB										
DM										
MD										

Chris said that *Madden '93* suffers from some of the same problems the original faced: jerky scrolling and sluggishness. Andy liked the sound effects.



***John Madden '93* for Super NES.**

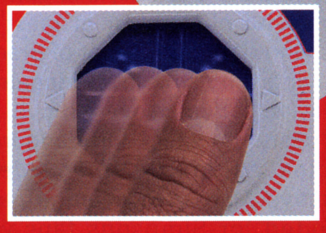
EDITORS' CORNER

Genesis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE										
CB										
DM										
MD										

Mike noted that the Genesis version is cleaner, but the graphics aren't as detailed. Everyone commented that the Madden sound clips added to the game.

LONGER PLAY
OR
YOUR MONEY BACK



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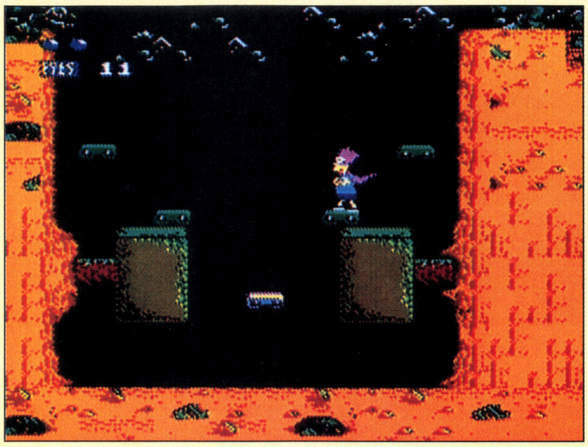
CIRCLE #128 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Bartman Meets Radioactive Man

ACCLAIM

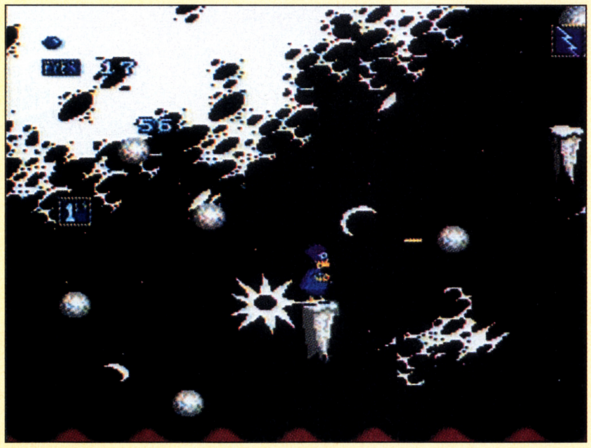
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

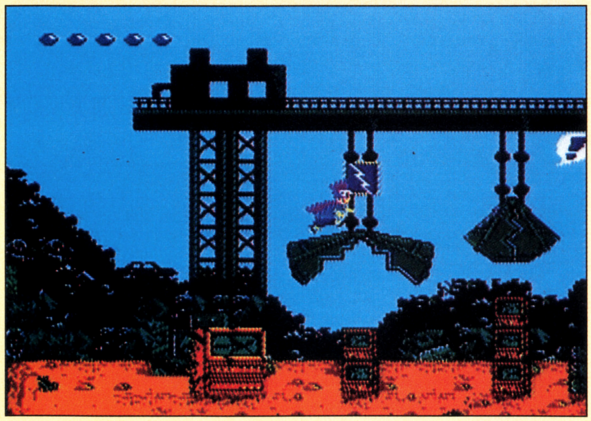
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC					5					
GRAPHICS						6				
PLAYABILITY						6				
OVERALL						6				



As everyone knows, reading comic books is one of Bart Simpson's favorite activities. And Radioactive Man is Bart's favorite superhero. So it's not surprising that Bart was a bit upset when he got to the end of the latest issue of *Radioactive Man* only to discover that the hero never made an appearance. That could only mean one thing, of course: that Radioactive Man was in trouble. And there's only one other superhero who can help him: Bartman!

In Bart Simpson's latest video-game adventure, *Bartman Meets Radioactive Man*, you help Bartman past the many obstacles and horrid creatures that populate such comic-book locations as Swamp Hag's Junkyard, the Waterlogged Lair of Dr. Crab, 20,000 Miles Under the Earth, the Sunken Volcano and Lava Man's Lava Pit. All told, there are four chapters to this comic caper, each comprising up to six scenes.





As you control Bart, you'll have to perform the usual precision jumping and shooting—flying and swimming, too. In addition, you must guide Bartman to such valuable treasures as radiation symbols that increase Bartman's energy level, tornadoes that make Bartman invincible, laser bolts that give Bartman shooting powers, ice crystals that give Bartman cold breath and, of course, 1-ups. Most bonuses are tucked away in very hard-to-reach places, so only control-pad masters can reach them.

There are plenty of villains too, who would like nothing better than to send Bartman back where he came from, preferably in a body bag. Big-bite bugs, welding droids, swamp bats, fireflies, octopi, jellyfish, dragons, lava squids and many more creatures populate this fantasy nightmare. In addition, a slew of obstacles do their part to keep Bartman from his confrontation with the evil powers that be. These include giant cranes, trash compactors, toxic drips, falling tires, torpedoes, riptide vents, conveyer belts, steam vents and bottomless pits, to name a few.

In case you didn't notice, this is one tough game. It'll take you awhile just to get past the first level. Luckily, although you start off with only four lives, you can continue several times from the level where you died. Even so, this game is for masterful players, or at least for players who don't mind a lot of practicing, playing the same level repeatedly until they've perfected every move.

The nasty monsters and dangerous obstacles aside, *Bartman Meets Radioactive Man* is an average game best suited for Simpsons fans who absolutely must have the latest video game featuring their favorite family. It surely adds little to the genre, as is typical of spin-off games. Still, if you're in the mood for a difficult jump-and-shoot contest, one that'll make your control hand numb and your nerves frazzled, this one ought to do the trick.

—Clayton Walnum

Acclaim Entertainment
71 Audrey Ave.
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 624-8888

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE				4						
CB			3							
DM					5					
MD					5					

Andy said it was tough to stick with this one, and that few are doing good NES titles anymore. Dave recommended to save up and buy *Bart's Nightmare*.

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CIRCLE #129 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Somer Assault

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16/ Turbo Duo ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

With the thousands of cartridges already in existence and hundreds of new ones produced every year, it was only a matter of time before game publishers started using video games to deal with the real, gritty issues of modern day life...issues like, "What would happen if you pitted a Slinky against the evil forces of the Zodiac?"

I know, it's not a pleasant idea, and many people would prefer to avoid thinking about it, but here at VG&CE we don't shy away from the tough questions.

Scathing sarcasm aside, this is exactly the form—if not precisely the plot—of the highly original and entertaining game *Somer Assault*. You control a large, flexible tube (like the tubes in *Marble Madness*), and you can walk down stairs without a care and make a squinchity sound. In fact, you can walk *up* stairs, across ceilings, defy gravity and hop up and down. Mounted along your sides are guns—the strength and number of guns depends on how many power-ups you've collected. As the timer clicks off the seconds, you crawl around a series of scrolling mazes, looking for the boss character and shooting any enemies that drift your way. Killing enemies often gets you a power-up, which can not only increase gun power, but can increase speed, health and number of lives.

The bosses, once you've found them, are all based on the signs of the zodiac. There are 12 bosses to blast through and an evil sorceress who's controlling these bosses. Bosses and mazes both get tougher to deal with as the game progresses, but very gradually.

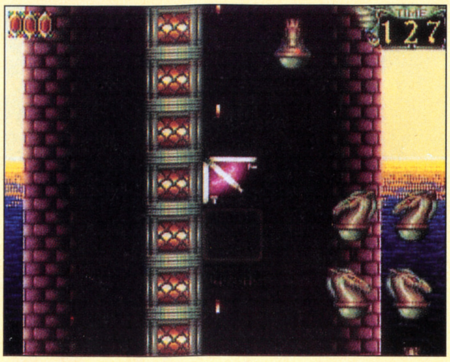
One cool tie-in to the zodiac theme is the way the game uses your birthday to present an added bonus (a very significant bonus, too). The game manual specifically avoids revealing the nature of the bonus, so I'll respect it and not expose it either; but it's safe to say that you'll find changing your birthday can be a valuable strategy.

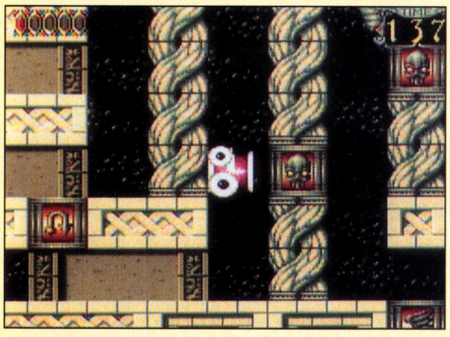
Controlling the tube is great fun once you get used to it. The effect is almost spooky. And a highly powered tube, properly controlled, is almost a thing of beauty. As far as I know, it's a completely new "play mechanic" that defies comparison.

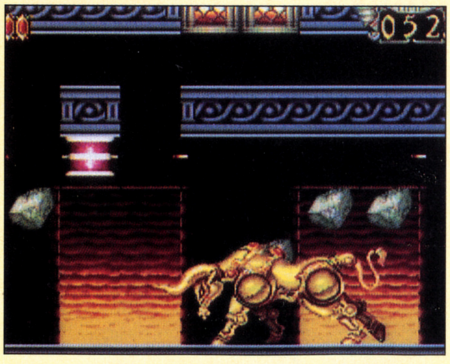
What the game seriously needs is length. The graphics are good (not great), the sound and music are solid and the idea is fantastically weird and loads of fun. But the mazes are neither long enough nor varied enough; the features and enemies don't change much from one to the next. They slowly get trickier and longer, but by the time they start presenting a significant challenge, you'll have played half the game. Perhaps if the designers had thought "dungeons" instead of "mazes" those segments of the game would have been more interesting and the game would have been much longer. Combine this with the infinite continues and bosses who aren't too difficult to defeat, and you end up with a game that takes very little time to conquer. That's a shame, since it's the kind of game you'd like to see last for weeks.

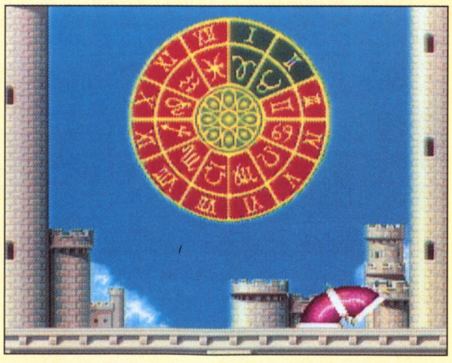
—Josh Mandel

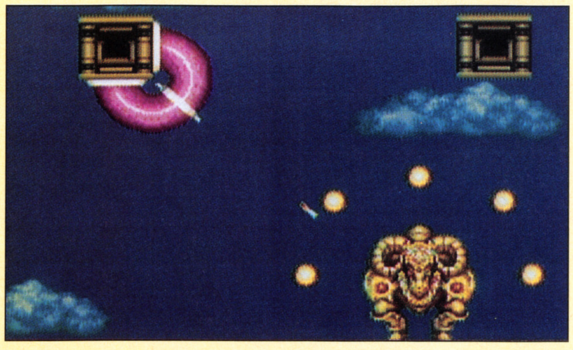
Turbo Technologies Inc.
6701 Center Drive West, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90045
(310) 641-4622











EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

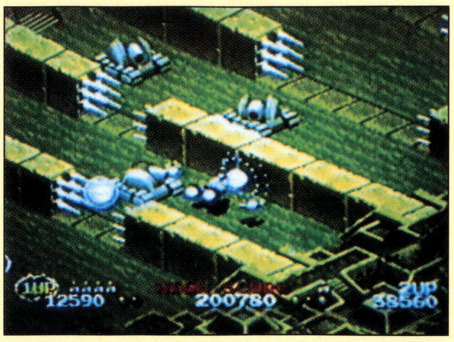
"Unique," "innovative" and "original" were words used to describe *Somer Assault*. Chris felt that it should be seen by more people than the TG-16 user base.

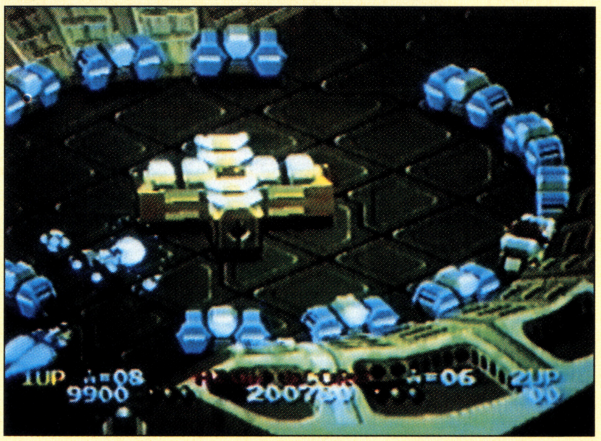
Viewpoint

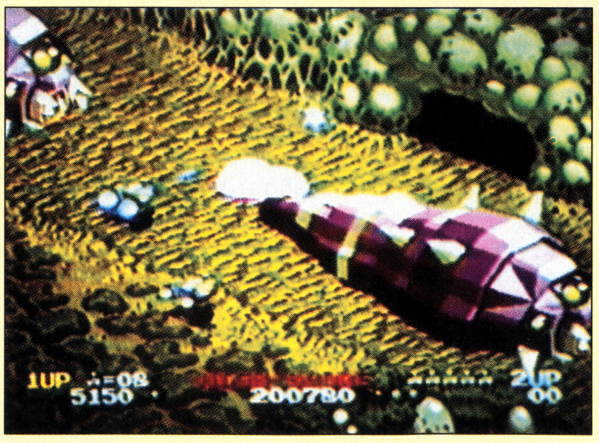
SNK

For the Neo•Geo (N/A)

SOUND/MUSIC	1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10
GRAPHICS	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **9** 10
PLAYABILITY	1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10
OVERALL	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10







So...what do *you* expect from a Neo•Geo game? At these prices, you have to expect great graphics and sounds—and *Viewpoint* has both. You'd probably want a game with long-lasting appeal, too—and, while *Viewpoint*'s six levels aren't particularly long, they're certainly worth repeating. Would you also be looking for arcade-level intensity that requires you to flail away at the controls like a maniac, cramping the muscles in your forearm as your fingertips do a mini-jackhammer on the "A" button? Yep, that's *Viewpoint* too.

Like *Andro Dunos*, *Last Resort* and any other SNK spaceship shoot-'em-up, this is a fast-fingered endurance test that throws everything but the kitchen sink up on the screen and expects you to clear a path with carefully aimed laser blasts. But there's a big difference between those contests and *Viewpoint*, and the game's title gives it away.

Like Sega's classic shooter *Zaxxon*, the action in *Viewpoint* takes place against a background that scrolls diagonally from the upper-right to the lower-left corner of the screen. Pointing the joystick up or down moves your ship forward and backward, unlike *Zaxxon*, which allowed you to move the ship up off the ground. In a refreshing change from the recent flow of "me too" Neo•Geo games, *Viewpoint*'s angled perspective has given the designers freedom to experiment with some wild pseudo-3-D effects, most of which are convincing enough to be considered successful. Unfortunately, the game's neatest gimmick—a sprocketed gate that can only be opened by shooting at a large gear that's engaged in its teeth—appears only once, in the very first level.

After that, it's all a blur of nicely sculpted polygon-based enemies who parade in front of your ship like a geometry teacher's nightmare. It's a beautiful game that drops the jaws of onlookers—but, for my money, the level of challenge is way too high.

Adding to the game's difficulty is a severe case of "the boss that refused to die" syndrome. It's tolerable in the case of the Level 2 boss, which appears to be dead but sends its brain after you just when you think you've tasted victory. But, by the time you reach the four-faced "skull" boss at the end of Level 4 (each face can take about a zillion hits), you'll wonder how you got yourself into such a mess. Worse yet, not one of the boss characters has an on-screen life meter to show how much damage you've done. That's a *major* omission in the eyes of some gamers.

Luckily, there's a hardcore audience out there for this type of shooter. As far as the game's similarities to *Zaxxon*...hey, if you're going to imitate an existing game, you might as well clone something other than *Street Fighter II*. *Zaxxon* may be remembered more for its place in the history books than for its play mechanics, but it's worth noting that the game was probably the least imitated of the coin-op blockbusters of the early '80s. By contrast, bright colors, polygons and boss characters make *Viewpoint* much more varied and interesting than even the sequel, *Super Zaxxon*.

—Chris Bieniek

SNK Home Entertainment Inc.
20603 Earl St.
Torrance, CA 90503
(310) 371-8555

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10
CB	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10
DM	1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10
MD	1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10

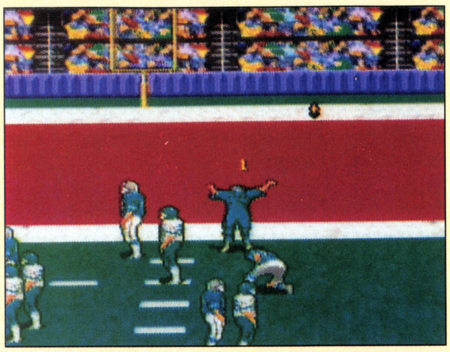
Dave called it "gorgeous, funky...and totally unplayable"; Mike thought the screen was too cluttered. Andy felt it was a perfect coin-op, but not for the home.

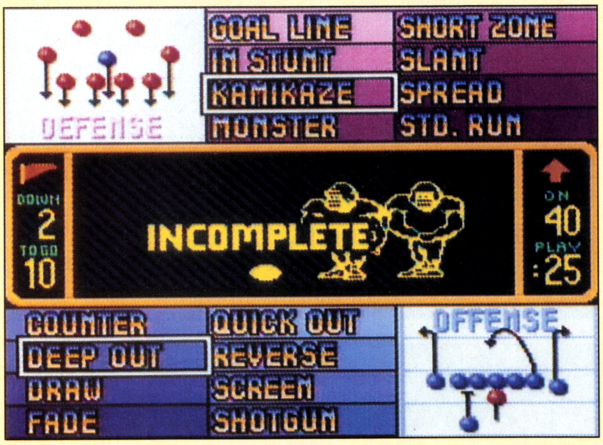
Pro Quarterback

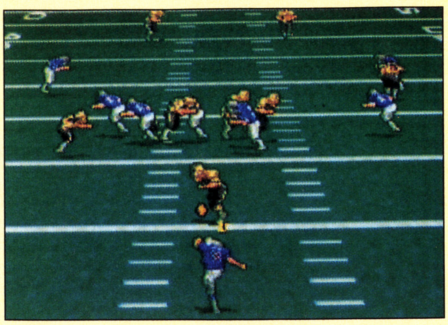
TRADEWEST

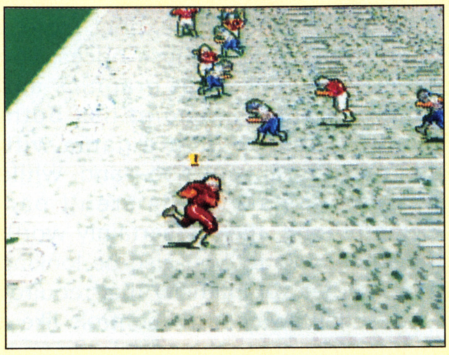
For the Super NES (N/A)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10









The pigskin flies through the air and before you know it—indeed before you can even find the ball against the sun—a brick wall slams into you and you're down. Your coach is on the sidelines gesticulating in a very unpleasant manner, and even the fans are booing as you cautiously wriggle to see if anything's broken.

All right, so *Pro Quarterback* isn't *quite* that thrilling, and regardless of how many times I was sacked, I never quite felt the agony of defeat, but playing the game was a definite blast nonetheless!

Even before the kickoff, you can choose from one player against the computer or two players either as teammates or playing *mano a mano*. Want a specific type of field? You can choose from grass, mud, dirt, snow, rain or even artificial turf. Even better for late-night games: You can turn off the rather disappointing audio. The game is split into four 15-minute quarters, just like real football, but, unlike real life, you can also choose ten-, five- or even two-minute quarters in order to speed up the game. Two-minute quarters reminded me of blitz chess somehow—just long enough for two or three serious plays before the whistle blew.

One annoyance I have with all football games is that they have these stupid interludes when I just want to get on with the game. Some of them have team members running on and off the field after plays are chosen; some of them have *other game* scores showing up and worse. *Pro Quarterback* isn't too bad in this regard: After each touchdown, you get to watch two players high-five in the end zone, and, after each extra point attempt, you see a Tradewest blimp while summarizing the results of the play. That's about it, though—plays end with a nice summary indicating yards gained or lost, and turnovers simply say so, all of which is animated on a scoreboard while allowing you to choose your next play.

There are tons of different plays in this game, actually. Real and fake punts and field goals, dozens of passing plays, running plays and more. Defense has almost as many choices, with perhaps the biggest problem being that you can always see the play your opponent chooses—computer or human—as you both leave the selection screen. As a result, you learn pretty quickly to try to sneak that glimpse of the opponent's choice to get an edge up.

The toughest part of this game is completing a play—just like in the real game, for that matter! Watching the Jets or Raiders play, though, I never get the feeling that the receiver didn't know what was going on—play after play. In *Pro Quarterback*, that's just what it looks like. Finding the receiving player, throwing the ball toward him and finally catching it is pretty darn tough. When a pass is completed or a running play works in faking out the opponent, it's *great!* That mad dash to the end zone and the dance and high-five coincide perfectly with my shouts of "all right!" and "touchdown!"

Upon reflection, it must be pretty tough to make a football game, one that allows players lots of control and is still fun, too. *Pro Quarterback* moves a long way in that direction, and, while the music isn't anything to bother with, the game itself is a blast, and the little animated sequences are cool (I just know that when I'm tackled and the sacker stands over my guy pointing downward he's yelling "you're *outta there!*"). If you're into football, I think this is a good bet. Check it out.

—Dave Taylor

Tradewest
2400 S. Highway 75
Corsicana, TX 75110
(903) 874-2683

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

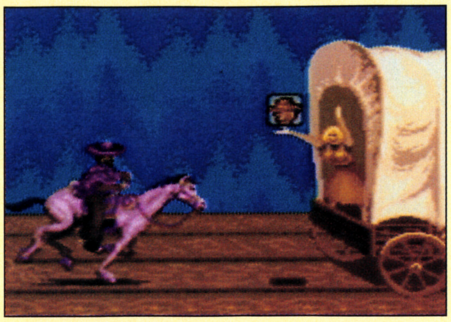
Chris didn't like the movement of the players, but enjoyed the scoreboard animations. Andy called it choppy, while Mike felt the perspective was too low.

Sunset Riders

KONAMI

For the Sega Genesis (N/A)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							■			
GRAPHICS								■		
PLAYABILITY								■		
OVERALL							■			



Like every other Genesis owner on the planet, I was stoked to hear that Konami is now producing games for my beloved 16-bit system. I was also stoked to hear that Konami's first Genesis release would be *Sunset Riders*, based on their own great coin-op. So, was I stoked after playing through the Genesis conversion? Not as much as I expected to be.

Before I make any criticisms, as we reviewers are wont to do, let's talk about the story line. You're a bounty hunter in the Old West, and you're hunting down four notorious criminals: Simon Greedwell, a money-grubbin' cattle rustler; Paco Loco, a bald bandito; Chief Scalpen, a vicious Indian chief; and Sir Richard Rose, a land baron of British ancestry.

There are two bounty hunters to choose from: Billy Cool and Cormano Wild. Billy fires his six-shooters faster than Cormano, but Cormano's shotgun has a wider range of attack. (I found Cormano's wider range to be much more useful.)

The object of the game is simple: Walk to the right, shoot the bad guys, jump over obstacles and duck to avoid being shot yourself. The controls are easy to learn, with the exception of the two "Shoot" buttons. The first button makes you stand still when firing, while the second button lets you keep moving. (The standstill firing mode comes in handy against a few of the bosses.)

Some of the baddies leave behind item-filled pouches when you blast 'em with lead, and you'll also find items by going into buildings. The Rapid Bullet gives you rapid-fire ability; the Gun gives you doubled firepower; the Star allows you to play a bonus round at the end of the level; the Dynamite lets you blow up nearby enemies; and the Coin gives you big bonus points. (Yes, you can have both the Rapid Bullet and the Gun power-ups simultaneously.)

Sounds fine so far, right? So you're wondering why I found the game "unstoke-worthy," right? It comes down to two problems:

Problem #1: *Sunset Riders* isn't a complete conversion. There are six levels in the coin-op, four in the Genesis conversion. There are four bounty hunters in the coin-op, two in the Genesis conversion. The reason for the missing levels, I'm guessing, is that the cart is only four megabits. Konami should've made the game eight megs and crammed in all of the levels and bounty hunters.

Problem #2: *Sunset Riders* is too easy. The coin-op was tough, but the Genesis conversion can be whupped in under a day—even on the "Hard" difficulty level. Konami can make a challenging game, so what happened here?

With all of the levels of the coin-op and a higher difficulty level, *Sunset Riders* would be dreamy. As it is now, it's a good game, but nothing to go mental over. Give Konami a tip of the hat for supporting the Genesis, but this hombre wants some bigger, tougher games from them in the future.

—Zach Meston

Konami
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4570
(708) 215-5100

continued on page 70

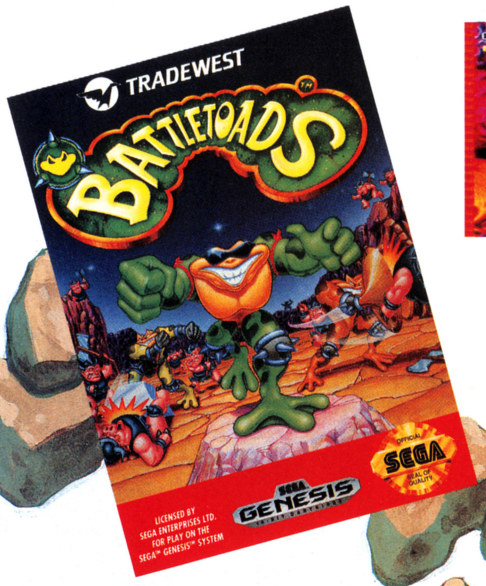
EDITORS' CORNER

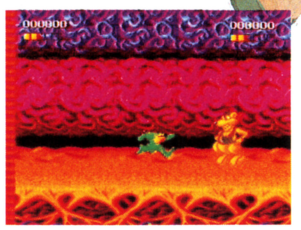
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE							■			
CB							■			
DM							■			
MD							■			

Dave called *Sunset Riders* a "nondescript side-scrolling shooter," while Andy, Mike and Chris all felt it was a good port from the coin-op—what Konami is known for.

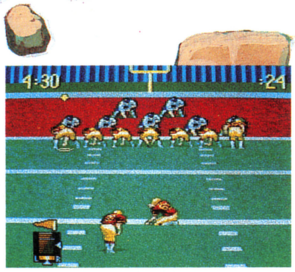
BUSTIN' THRO
SELECT
START

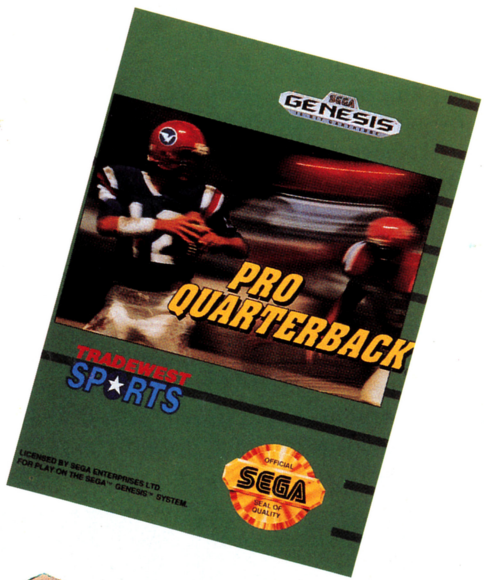
UGH FOR YOU!



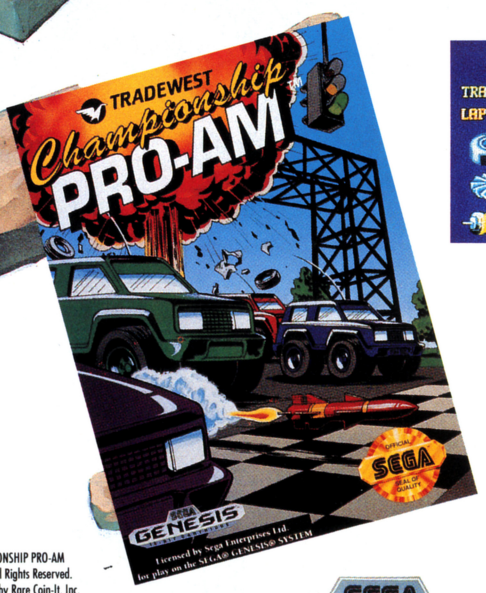


When the evil Dark Queen kidnaps both your best buddy and the best-looking girl this side of the Mazallion Star Cluster, what're you gonna do about it? Cry? Hide? Call the Starcops? No way – 'cause you're a BATTLETOAD! So strap on your blaster, fire up the Toadster, and get on down to the Dark Queen's planet – and don't forget to take along the Jet Turbo, the Space Board and the Speed Bike. Because you'll need 'em all if you're gonna rescue your friends and get the frog outa there with your green skin intact!





Lace up your cleats and get ready to play the most realistic football game ever produced! All the hard-hitting action of football comes through in living color, using the digitized images of real players. Every detail of football is right here – from the opening kickoff to the post-game stats. You call the shots, you call the plays... After all, you're a pro now – a PRO QUARTERBACK!



Flip the switch and get ready to have a blast! Here's a fast and furious racing game with a difference: avoid the road hazards... pick up the performance goodies... and wield an arsenal of wicked weapons to slow down or destroy your competition! Roar through 24 levels of CHAMPIONSHIP PRO-AM racing on 8 different tracks... but watch your tailpipes, or you'll be scrap metal!

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SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE

TRADEWEST

Tradewest, Inc. 2400 South Highway 75, Corsicana, TX 75110

CIRCLE #130 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Wing Commander

MINDSCAPE

For the Super NES ($69.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC									9	
GRAPHICS								8		
PLAYABILITY									9	
OVERALL									9	

Let's pretend that you have somehow not heard about *Wing Commander*, the freakishly popular 3-D space combat game for IBM (and Amiga) computers. Let's further pretend that you don't know the story line of the game, so I can use the next paragraph to tell you about it.

In the late 27th century, the Terran Confederation is at war with the Kilrathi, a catlike alien race with decidedly antisocial tendencies. You're a rookie pilot aboard the TCS *Tiger's Claw*, a Confederation craft sent into Kilrathi space to carry out a series of missions and kick some feline butt.

There are five mission types: Defend (guard a stationary target), Escort (guard a large ship), Intercept (seek and destroy Kilrathi vessels), Patrol (engage Kilrathis in uncharted space) and Strike (destroy a specific enemy target).

During each mission, you'll fly one of four spacecraft, with different attack and defense capabilities. You'll also fly with one of eight different wingmen...er, wingpersons (two of the pilots are female). Some wingpersons are cautious to the point of cowardice, while others are totally reckless and engage the Kilrathi regardless of mission orders.

The in-flight controls make use of every button on the Super NES control pad. Various button presses allow you to target an enemy ship, to fire or toggle between various weapons, to communicate with friendly and enemy ships, to accelerate and decelerate and to jump (or hyperspace) between navigation points.

Dogfights with the Kilrathi are fast and furious. Mode 7 graphics are nicely used to make the enemy spaceships shrink, grow and spin in your view screen. The ships get pixelated (and *very* ugly) at extremely close range, but, in the heat of battle, you really won't notice this unless you're a nitpicky reviewer.

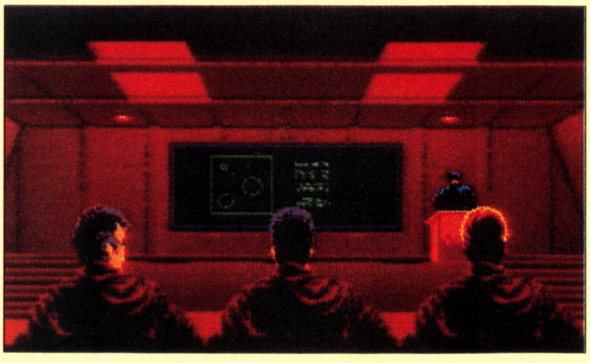
Before and after each mission, you get to wander around the three rooms of the *Tiger's Claw*. At the Officer's Club, you can fly a TrainSim against simulated Kilrathi ships and trade dogfighting tips with your wingpersons. In the barracks, you can inspect any medals you've won during your tour of duty. (There are several medals to be earned.) The briefing room is where you go when you're ready to start the next mission.

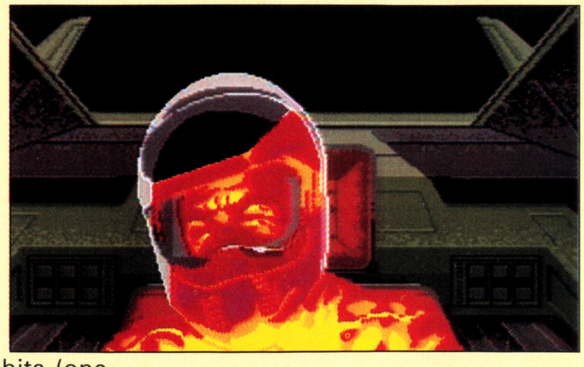
The most stunning aspect of the SNES version of *Wing Commander* is how close it is to the IBM version, while using a mere eight megabits (one megabyte) of memory. The game play is virtually identical, all of the music is present and only a few visuals have been omitted, most noticeably the "Meanwhile..." intermission scenes. (You're still presented with the intermission text, but with a generic planet as a backdrop.)

My overall opinion, in three words or less: *Wing Commander* rocks. The game play is addictive and challenging, the graphics and sound are stunning and the story line is wonderfully written. I know I'm beginning to sound just a bit too gushy, but tougher reviewers than myself have also gushed all over this game. Buy it, and you'll find out why.

—Zach Meston

Mindscape
60 Leveroni Court
Novato, CA 94949
(415) 883-3000





EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE								8		
CB							7			
DM									9	
MD								8		

Mike said the controls are difficult to master, but the game breaks new ground. Dave felt it was worth the time investment; Andy called it a tough translation.

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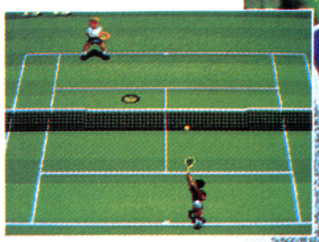
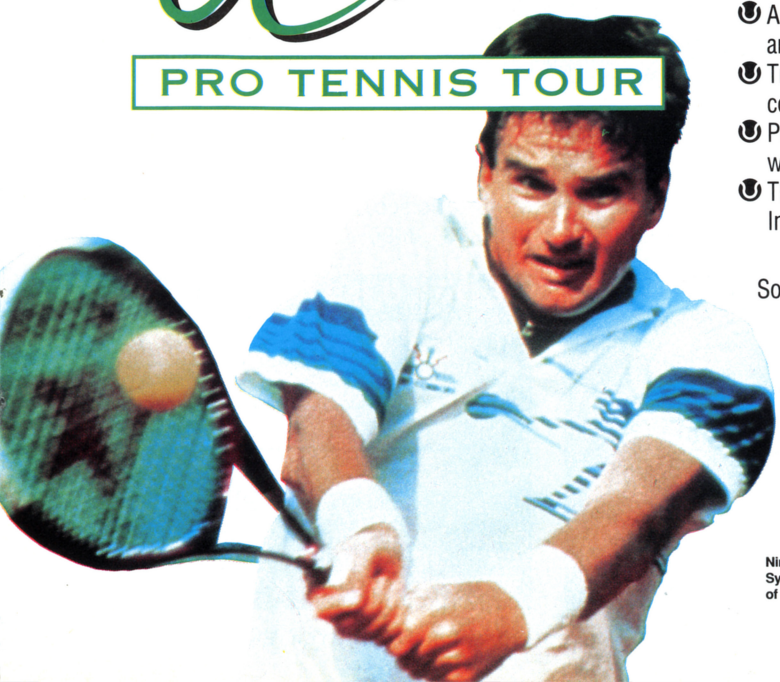
Jimmy Connors



Jimmy Connors

PRO TENNIS TOUR



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(415) 332-8749
Developed by Blue Byte
Jimmy Connors photos by Duomo
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CIRCLE #131 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

World Class Leader Board

U.S. GOLD

For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

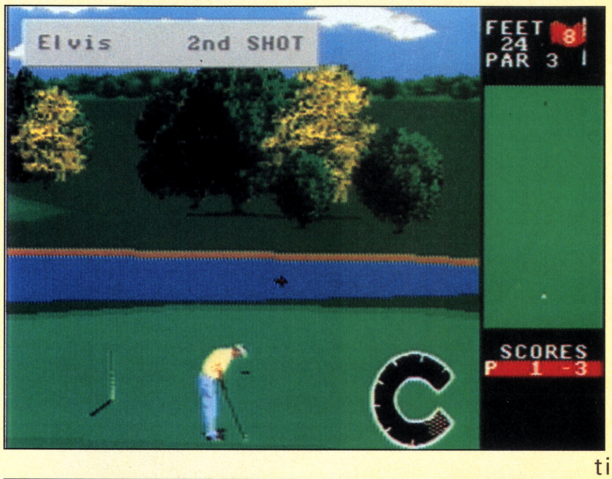
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

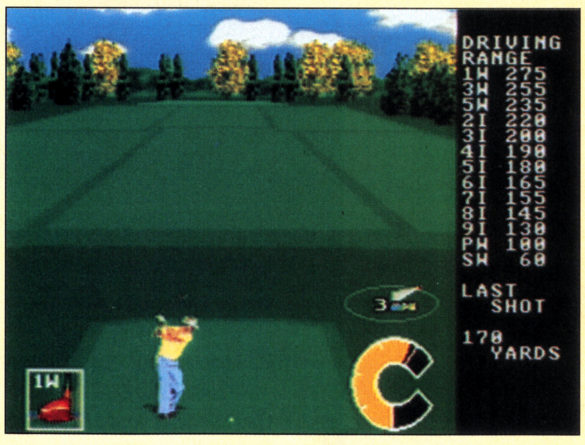
If you've been a faithful VG&CE reader over the years, you probably recognize the *Leader Board* name—Access Software has been cranking out updates of this golf game for years, as well as licensing it out to people like U.S. Gold. Even though Access has moved on to the greener fairways of its hugely popular *Links* series, the *Leader Board* games are still generally lumped in with the best golf titles on any game system or computer platform.

Well, I have played many, many golf video games in my day, and let me tell you, the Genesis version of *World Class Leader Board* is...er... another one. *WCLB* (as we shall henceforth call it) has everything that's expected of golf simulations nowadays—you know, clubs, balls, pesky winds, etc. Also all the rage these days, *WCLB* appears to have scaling greens—no, that's not a haute cuisine

vegetable, it's a catch phrase that describes a zooming effect, the likes of which are rarely seen outside of the Super NES and Lynx, the only systems that can do scaling at the hardware level. It's used in *WCLB* in a small window on the right side of the screen, tracking the ball's flight with a smooth-scrolling bird's-eye view.

Refreshingly, there's no tedious duplication of golf meccas like Pebble Beach or Waialai, pricey venues





even the most affluent VG&CE readers probably couldn't afford to play three holes at. I don't know if they're culled from real life, but all the courses in *WCLB* appear to have been designed by a sophomore computer sciences major at Berkeley. They're not ugly; in fact, some of them are quite striking. They're just, well, *computery*.

Anyway, I won't bore you with details about *WCLB*'s control scheme—it's quite adequate, meaning U.S. Gold has managed to make it just as difficult to swing your club in Game Land as I imagine it must be in real life. I will mention one option I did enjoy: You can abandon your game at any point to an eager-to-please computerized player.

Overall, I'd say *WCLB* is a pretty solid game, with one glaring exception: It would have been nice if I could've wrapped a nine-iron around the head of the commentator, who offers snide, digitized comments on the order of "Oooh...can't be too happy about that one" whenever I hit my ball into the lake or smack into a tree. Come to think of it, why don't any of these golf "simulations" let you bean a spectator once in awhile? Or slap around your caddy for making too much noise?

—Bob Strauss

U.S. Gold Inc.
631 Howard St.
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 281-8690

continued on page 77

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**

Andy is a sucker for any version of *Leader Board*, and thought it was a good port to the Genesis. Chris called it "classic golf" that employs great scaling.

Not Recommended For Cowards.

From deep within Mordroc's Castle, a foul stench rises up to mix with the cold, damp midnight air. In the deadly caves far below the surface, the evil wizard's pet fire-breathing dragon, Singe, guards the captive Princess Daphne. You, Dirk the Daring, walk steadily toward the castle gate. You feel no fear—but then, fear is for cowards. No other would dare to enter this perilous castle where Mordroc has imprisoned the helpless princess. But for you, there is no other possible course to take. Now is the time for heroes. Now is the time to enter the

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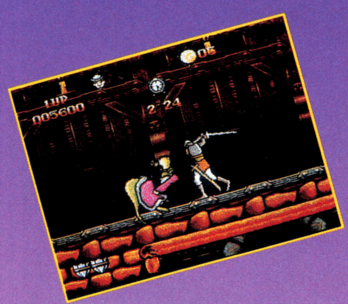

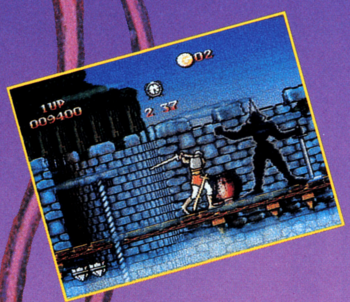

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CIRCLE #134 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 72

Time Cruise

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16/ Turbo Duo ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

This third pinball title for the Turbo systems has been available for the past few years in Japan under the same name. TTI finally released a North American version, and the anticipation of an elusive gem from the Far East has turned iffy.

Alien Crush and *Devil's Crush* set a standard for video pinball. Featuring traditional pinball with videogame animation and playability, they were neither dull simulations nor contests with pinballing added as a side note. Rather, the *Crush* games were successful marriages of both, providing aspects that real pinball could never have and opening up video games to more traditional types of arcade fun. This same idea holds true for recent pinball titles, notably *Crüe Ball* for the Genesis.

What *Time Cruise* offers as new is merely technical and not conceptual: The play table scrolls three screens high and three wide. But, to clarify, the overall table is not 3 x 3. Instead, a central board, three screens high, has two tables (that are two high) connected to both its sides.

The game's theme involves sending the ball to a bonus level representing a time period, where points are scored for successfully performing challenges with the steel sphere. But the time-travel nonsense is pointless. The ball is putted like a golf ball in a level that's supposed to be set in the prehistoric age, except such expected motifs as dinosaurs, tarpits and erupting volcanoes are not to be found. Just water traps, bushes and rolling greens—gee, a lot like modern-day golf courses!

One bonus screen plays as a pachinko game and another requires the player to roll the pinball through a maze without dropping it into a hole. The remaining screens aren't worth mentioning, as they are typical contests where the ball is flipped to hit moving targets—and boring at that.

Actually, the pachinko and golfing are what are most fun about *Time Cruise*. The pinball play itself features only hitting bumpers and targets to spell words, and shooting the ball through gates and rollovers. It's traditional pinballing, except hampered by ball movement so unrealistic that the ball jitters when it rests in place above a raised flipper. And it moves so sluggishly that the simulated incline of the table seems to be level.

Therefore, the ball meanders about the screen and rarely sinks past the lower flippers. Points are easily racked up, but this makes for tedious play. Pinball isn't about making ridiculously high scores; it's about getting to do something fun with it. Putting it or playing pachinko with it don't count.

(See "Pinball Plethora" on page 114 of this issue for a look at *Crüe Ball* and other pinball games.)

—Howard Wen

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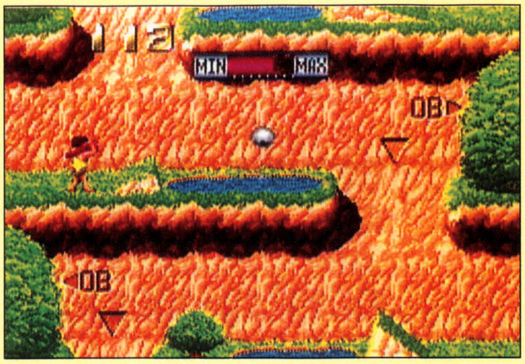

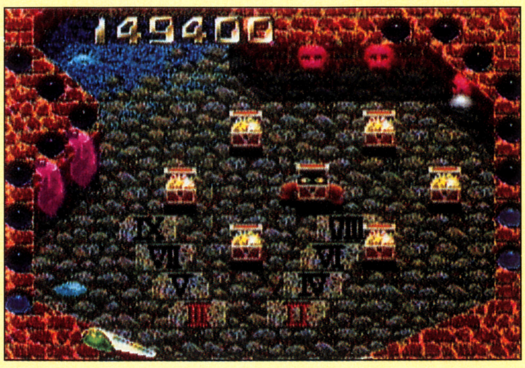

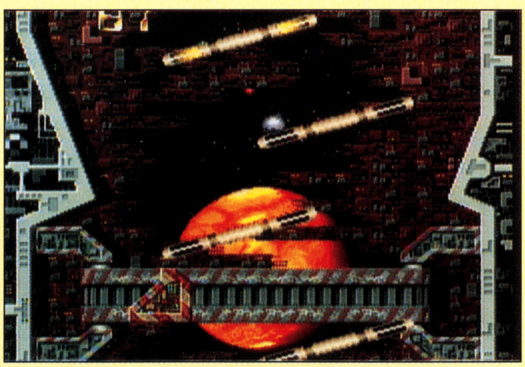

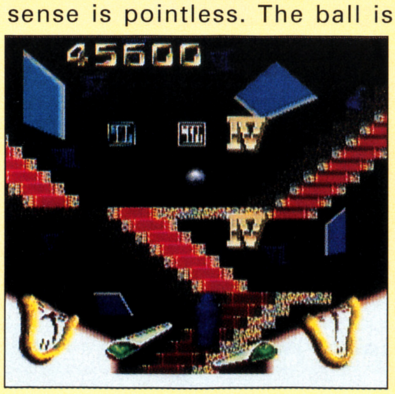

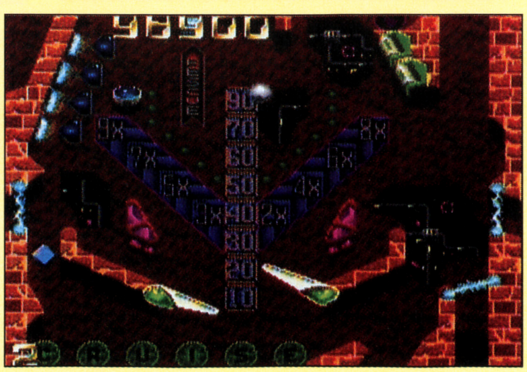

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Andy and Chris both noted the inaccurate-at-times ball movement, but everyone liked *Time Cruise*'s approach and treatment. The multiple playfields are the key.

The Hunt for Red October

HI TECH EXPRESSIONS

For the Super NES ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

The Hunt for Red October was a complex story of intrigue and power, not something easily transportable to a video-game console. So, if you're expecting the Super NES version of *Red October* to be as gripping as the original story, you will be disappointed. However, if you have a hankering for underwater shoot-'em-ups, climb behind the periscope and set off for a cruise under the surface of the world's seas. One thing is for sure: There's no shortage of action in this watery blastathon.

The Hunt for Red October is divided into five missions, each of which is further divided into two or three scenes. In the first mission, you take on the persona of the Soviet captain Marko Ramius as he tries to defect from his motherland. As you skedaddle from ocean to ocean, you better know your weapons systems well; you'll be facing attacks both from above and below. Battleships, submarines, planes and more are all intent on keeping the *Red October* from leaving Soviet waters. Other missions have you escorting an ocean liner to safety, neutralizing terrorist bases, defending oil platforms and helping to end Communist rule in the Soviet Union, among others.

If all this sounds dangerous, you'll be delighted to hear about your four weapons systems, each of which is effective against certain enemies and in certain situations. Torpedoes fire from the front, taking out anything they collide with. Surface-to-air missiles fight back against airborne enemies. Surface-to-surface missiles make scrap metal of ships and ground targets. And, finally, bombs defend against attack from below.

Also included in your sub's systems are two defensive devices: the electronic countermeasures system and the cavitation drive. The first floats out in front of your ship and makes it difficult for the *Red October* to be tracked. The second device allows the *Red October* to slip almost silently through the waters, preventing enemies from tracking the sub accurately.

Though most of the game is played as a vertically scrolling shooter, in certain locations you switch to a target-shooting scene, where you shoot "into" the screen at opponents. For this part of the game, you can use your control pad to move a targeting cursor on the screen, or you can connect Nintendo's Super Scope to simulate a periscope view. With either device, you'd better be a slick shot if you want to make it through the level.

There's more to a game than action, of course. Graphics and sound, too, go a long way toward making a game a hit. The scenes in *Red October* are fairly well drawn but tend to be similar from one mission to the next. A little variety in the backgrounds would have spiced up the game a lot. The sound effects, too, are well engineered, having a muffled, underwater effect. However, these sound effects are limited mostly to explosions. A greater variety of sounds would have made *Red October* more interesting.

While *The Hunt for Red October* isn't the best shooter to patrol the oceans, it'll provide plenty of action for players who take pleasure in blasting everything on the screen. Whether or not it has what it takes to stay afloat is up to the marketplace.

—Clayton Walnum

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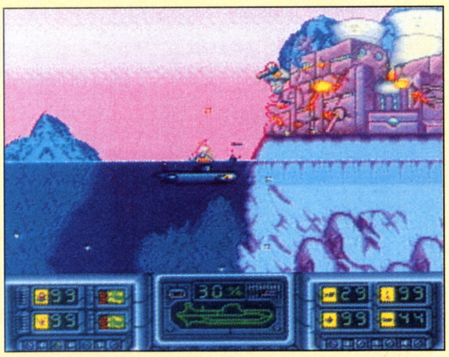

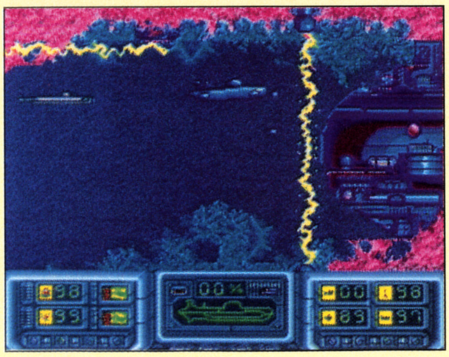

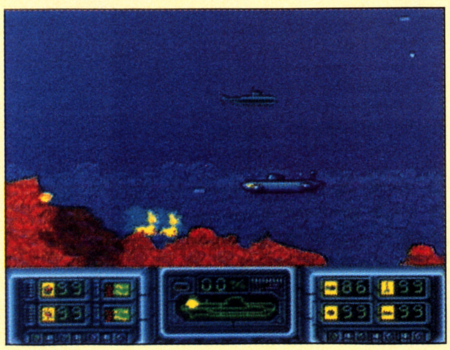

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

Chris said that, even with a Super Scope option, *Red October* didn't offer enough variety. Mike, Dave and Andy all felt it was an NES game done on the SNES.

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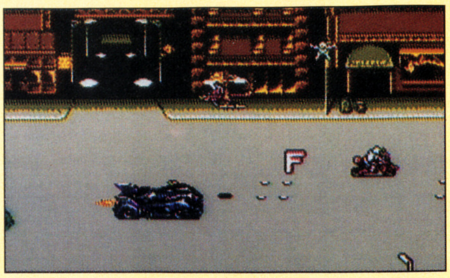
CIRCLE #135 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Batman Returns

KONAMI

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (N/A)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10



There's this girl I had a crush on. *Major* crush. Every time I saw her, the song "Dream Weaver" started playing in my head. So, I invited her to see *Batman Returns* with me, thinking that it would be great and thinking that we'd be able to talk about it for hours after it was over, allowing me to bask in her ethereal glow.

Oops.

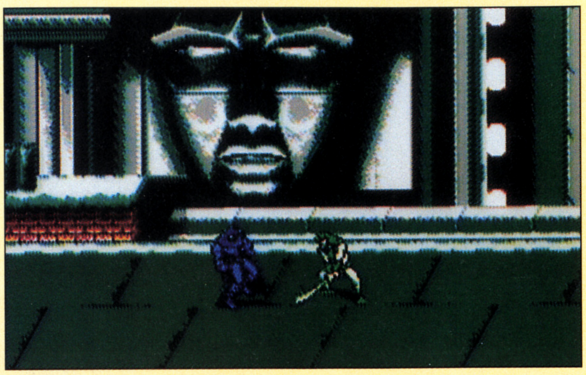
The movie was boring, the popcorn was awful and there was this guy sitting behind us who just wouldn't *shut up*. But the best was yet to come: After the closing credits started to roll, my date mentioned that she got a speeding ticket on the way to the theater.

Fortunately, my experience with *Batman Returns*, the game, wasn't nearly as bad as my experience with *Batman Returns*, the movie. But it wasn't as memorable, either.

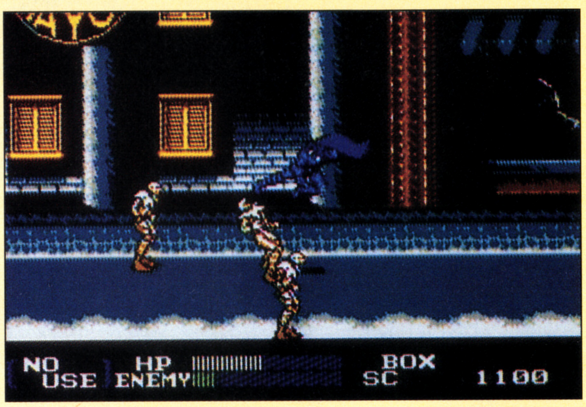
The six-level game follows the movie story line closely. Gotham City's under siege by the Penguin and the Catwoman, and, being the do-gooder that you are, it's your job to stop them. Of course, you'll also have to battle through wave after wave of thugs from the Red Triangle Circus Gang—killer clowns, stilt-walkers, fire-breathers and others.

In most levels, the game play is simple as can be: Walk to the right, wait for bad guys to pop out of the scenery and knock the bejesus out of them. (There are two different levels where you control the Batmobile and Batskiboat, but they are just as straightforward.) You've got a variety of attack moves to use, including a spin attack so powerful that it drains a unit from your life gauge. You are also equipped with Batarangs and a grappling hook to climb upward or hit overhead enemies.

You only have only one life in *Batman Returns*, but there are plenty of energy refills to be found in each level, and you'll refill the gauge entirely for every 10,000 points scored. You also get both passwords and infinite continues, but there's a catch: The more continues you use, the less energy you start with when continuing.



My major disappointment with *Batman Returns* is that it uses a reworked version of the game engine from *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II* and *III*. We've seen this kind of "recycling" before—Capcom uses its *Mega Man* engine with most of its Disney tie-in games, and Sega seems to use the *Sonic the Hedgehog* engine with every platform game it releases—but it's disappointing that Konami couldn't have taken a fresh approach to the game play.



The game's graphics are slightly above average, drawn with dark and gloomy palettes to match the dark and gloomy cinematography of the film, but the sound and music are completely average and instantly forgettable.

Batman Returns is a fine beat-'em-up, but it's a game you've played many times before. If you're a real Batman nut, I suggest you check out Sunsoft's *Batman: Revenge of the Joker*, which has better audiovisuals and more varied game play.

—Zach Meston

Konami
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4570
(708) 215-5100

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Andy didn't feel that *Batman Returns* cut new ground and was slow, while Chris thought it was still an exciting beat-'em-up. Mike didn't think it was an easy game.

Super Valis IV

ATLUS

For the Super NES ($59.99)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							■			
GRAPHICS									■	
PLAYABILITY								■		
OVERALL								■		

It has been thousands of years since King Gallagher and his people of the Spirit World were banished into a crystal pillar and sent to the depths of the ocean. One evening, as the red moon of the Spirit World rises, the crystal bursts to the surface, and the king and his followers are resurrected to once again fight for domination of the world.

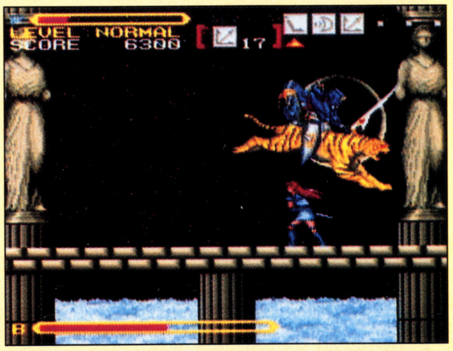
Queen Valna's world is conquered and she is captured; after all, the Valis warrior Yuko Ahso is long gone. Her execution looms near as Lena Brande, the strongest fighter among the rebels, requests to invade the castle of the dark forces. Yuko speaks from above, as she has become the people's goddess, and hands down the Valis sword to Lena to take up the fight.

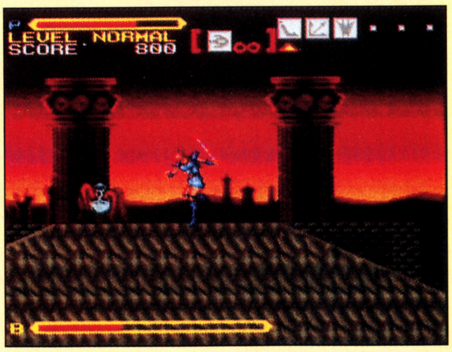
Super Valis IV is obviously enough the fourth installment of the series, and it takes full advantage of the abilities of the SNES.

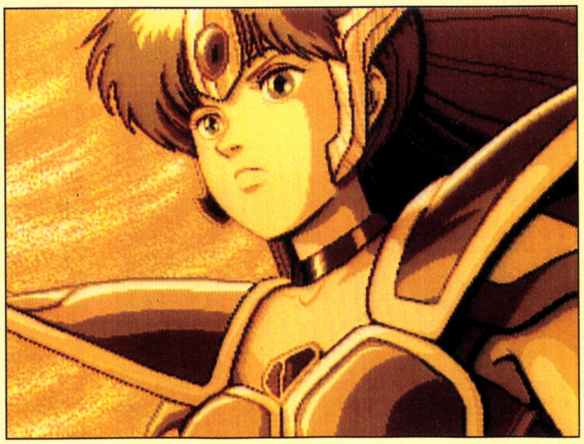
The game is divided into six stages (or possibly seven—the docs I had were contradictory), each of which are additionally divided into two or more scenes. Action proceeds in generally a horizontal direction, but with many areas of jumping from ledge to ledge, making for plenty of vertical scrolling as well.

Lena is armed with the powerful Valis sword and a special missile attack. In addition, she may pick up any of four special attack power-ups that will afford a limited number of attacks in place of her normal unlimited missile attacks. Other power-ups consist of heart icons that contain two doses of health restoration, and armor icons that will protect Lena from attack five times before disappearing. Up to six power-ups of any type may be carried at a time.

Lena's health is represented by a bar, which decreases with each hit, naturally enough. The size of the bar is increased substantially at every 10,000 points, which is a great incentive to use the unlimited continues as little as possible. If the continues make things too easy, there is always the option of setting the game from the normal to the hard mode, which will definitely shake things up a bit.







Great graphics abound here. The backgrounds are really good, and the animation is also great. Up to eight planes of scrolling in some areas give everything a very smooth appearance. The soundtrack stays the same for the most part, but does vary somewhat as the bosses come and go. The enemies within each level are tough, and, while many may be avoided, your ranking at the end of the game (providing, of course, that you actually *make* it to the end of the game) is based upon the points scored in each area, as well as the total amount of time spent there.

Even if you manage to finish this one quickly, the additional difficulty mode and challenge of gaining a higher game-end ranking should keep it entertaining for awhile. Definitely worth a look.

—Brent Walker

Atlus Software
17145 Von Karman Ave., Suite 110
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 757-1212

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE								■		
CB								■		
DM								■		
MD								■		

Mike called *Super Valis IV* an "uninspired hack 'n slash," while Chris thought the SNES version was a competent, though not innovative, chapter in the *Valis* series.

Andre Agassi Tennis

TECMAGIK

For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

After three years without a single tennis game, Genesis owners will soon have three to choose from. The latest, *Andre Agassi Tennis*, features one of the most colorful players on the professional circuit today.

At the start of the game, you select between practice, tournament or "skins" tournament modes, and choose which of the eight available players you'll be. The player's forehand, backhand and serve are rated by strength and accuracy. Practice mode lets you perfect your strokes on any of the available court surfaces: grass, clay, hard or indoor. The different surfaces affect ball bounce and spin.

Tournaments are played as either singles or doubles events. You can select any of the available computer players to be your partner in doubles. In two-player mode, you can play doubles cooperatively or competitively, or play standard singles matches against one another. There are no passwords or battery backup options, so tournaments must be completed in one sitting.

The game's control mechanism uses a system where the longer you hold down a shot button, the more power you get out of the shot. Pressing the control pad left or right while holding the button angles your shot, and pressing up or down puts either topspin or backspin on the ball.

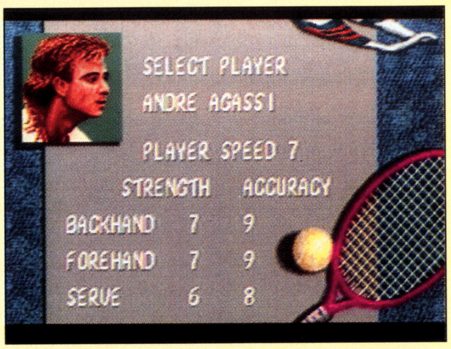
To hit the ball solidly, you must start holding down a shot button almost immediately after the opposing player strikes the ball. Since you are unable to move while holding down a button, getting into position is difficult. The game tries to overcome this by requiring your player to be only remotely close to the ball. Once the ball arrives, the game will automatically select the proper stroke based on the button you've pressed, move your player into position and return the shot. It is an unintuitive system that left me feeling I had little control over my player's actions. Coupled with unresponsive player movement, the game is difficult and frustrating to play.

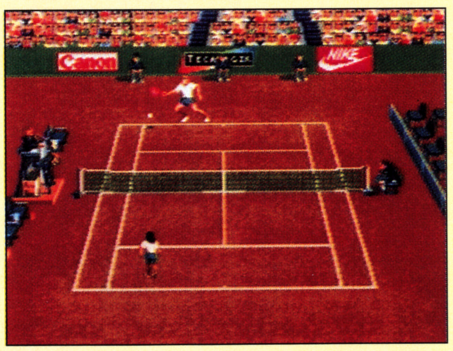
The graphics and sound don't help matters much. The playfield is small and utilizes none of the Genesis' scrolling capabilities. The ball moves smoothly across the screen, but the player animations are choppy. The umpire, line judges and crowd graphics are so uninspired it's hard to believe this is a 16-bit game. The digitized speech is clear but sometimes stumbles over the score, and the crowd is *silent*—no applause, no catcalls, no anything.

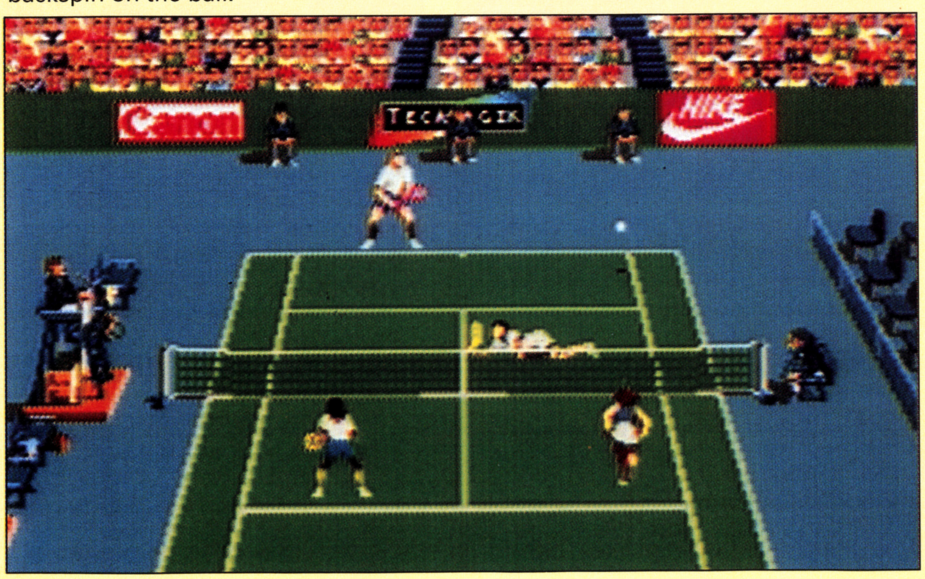
Many of today's standard sports-game features are missing: There is no instant replay; you can't construct your own player for the tournaments; and there is no exhibition match mode. Since each player has his or her own unique strengths and weaknesses, the option to practice against a specific opponent in an exhibition match would have proven extremely useful later in tournament play. As it stands, *Andre Agassi Tennis* is a lackluster game that fails to live up to its star's "image."

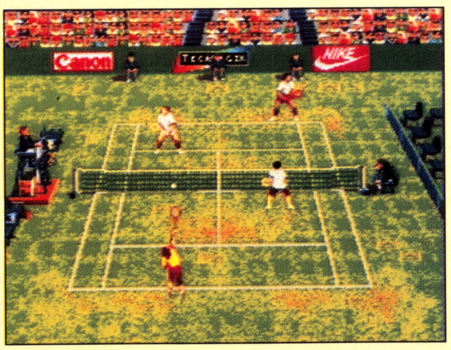
—Jeffrey Tschiltsch

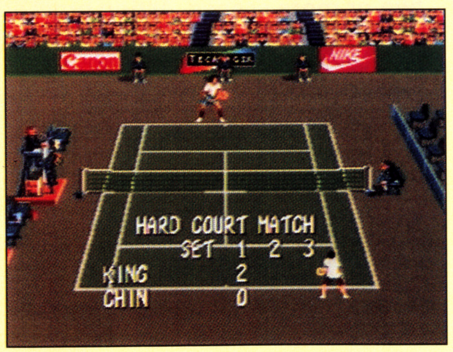
Tecmagik
1301 Shoreway Drive, Suite 315
Belmont, CA 94002
(415) 637-1350











EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Mike, Chris and Andy all pointed to *Andre Agassi Tennis*' poor animation as a stumbling block to the game's success. Chris also thought it was too hard to control.

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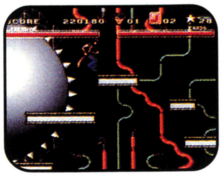

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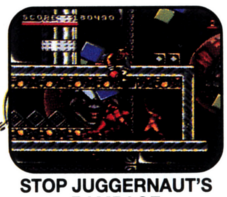

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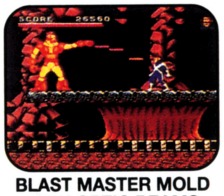

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Equinox

SONY IMAGESOFT

For the Super NES ($59.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC									9	
GRAPHICS								8		
PLAYABILITY								8		
OVERALL								8		

The first thing that leapt out at me in *Equinox*, the sequel to the NES game *Solstice*, is the way I had to contort the SNES's control pad. This is one of those games where you control a creature that only walks diagonally, using controls that are basically designed for up-and-down and side-to-side movement. But that's one of the very few flaws in what's otherwise a slick and playable arcade/role-playing game.

There are seven continents ("kingdoms") and eight dungeons in the world of *Equinox*. The continents are populated only by enemies; you won't be holding any casual conversations with grateful villagers in *Equinox*. The continents also have multiple entrances to the underground dungeons, which are the substance of the game. In each dungeon, you'll collect a dozen magical items of one sort or another, color-coded keys, weapons, potions, food and spell parchments.

The dungeons range from 16 rooms to over 100, and it's in the dungeons that you'll be challenged with myriad puzzles and hazards. Enemies of varying speed and intelligence roam the halls and rooms; there are spike-studded obstacles and gimmicked bricks that can either impede or assist you. Some solutions aren't obvious because the game is presented in an unusual "three-quarters above" 3-D perspective, but that perspective also makes the dungeons seem more solid and real than the flat mazes of most RPGs.

The role-playing element is less developed than the arcade element. You must find ways to increase your magical strength and your lifeline, and you'll have to acquire new weapons and spells. But these are all carefully and stingily meted out over the course of the game—usually one spell and one new weapon per dungeon. It's far more structured than *Zelda 3*, which lets you build your character in many ways and in any order you wish.

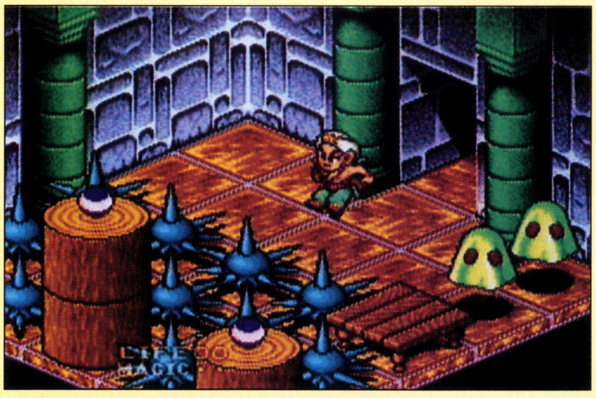
But *Equinox* isn't trying to be *Zelda 3*. There's little exploration involved; it's truly a game for dungeon-lovers. Getting from kingdom to kingdom on the overland, which does involve a bit of battle, almost serves as an intermission between the much longer dungeon "acts." And the game fosters a real sense of accomplishment, because the dungeon bosses are extraordinarily tough—tougher by far than the relatively wimpy minions out in the rest of the world. The bosses have complex patterns of attack that must be fought with split-second timing.

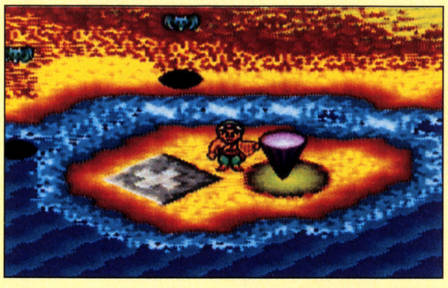
When aboveground, you can rotate the whole world (for those of you who can't get enough of Mode 7, here ya go), but the scenery is very indistinct and flickery. It wavers continuously as if it's being seen through rising heat. The underground areas are graphically excellent; the characters and structures are boldly drawn and brilliantly colored. The sound effects are also imaginative and extremely effective, with heartbeats, distant footfalls and dramatic musical "stings" in all the right places.

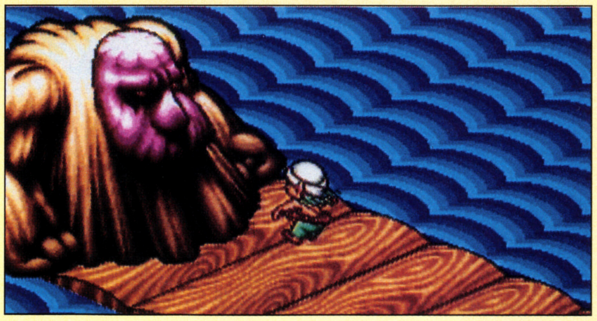
With its generous four-game battery backup and extra-tough dungeons and bosses, this is not the kind of game you'll be satisfied to rent. It demands to be conquered, and Sony Imagesoft hasn't made that an easy task.

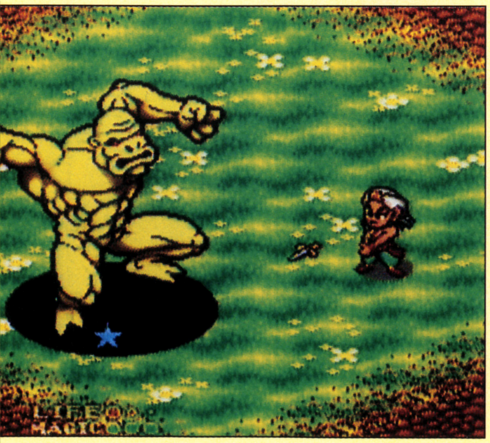
—Josh Mandel

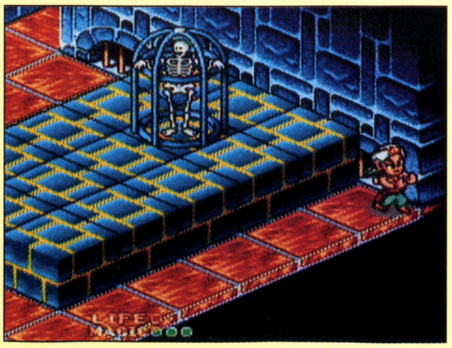
Sony Imagesoft
9200 Sunset Blvd.,
Suite 820
Los Angeles, CA 90069
(310) 858-3777











EDITORS' CORNER

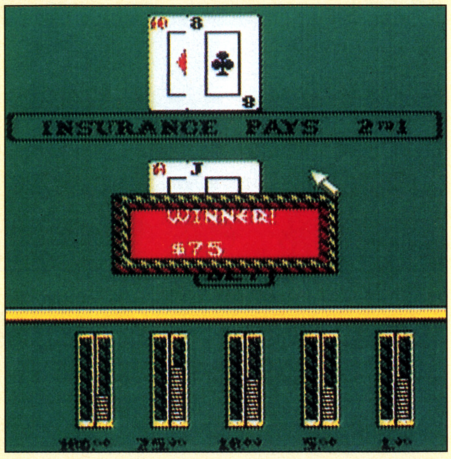
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE						6				
CB								8		
DM							7			
MD						6				

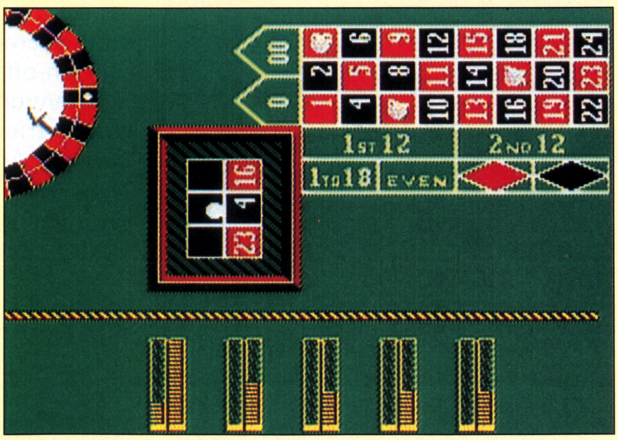
Chris said *Equinox* requires a bit of patience, but it pays off with great challenge. Dave thought the graphics were "swell," but the game was forgotten.

Caesar's Palace

VIRGIN GAMES
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($29.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10





Ah, the images Caesar's Palace brings to mind: the unbelievable wealth being thrown around like candy, the tacky decor, the scantily clad women and philandering men, the crowds of luckless, penniless stragglers standing outside the main doors hoping for a glimpse of glamour.

Oh, wait, did you say *Caesar's* Palace? I thought you said *Buckingham* Palace! Caesar's Palace is slightly different, if only because it's one of the most famous casinos in the gambling mecca of Las Vegas. This cartridge uses Caesar's as the setting for a series of gambling games, but only in a very cursory way.

You arrive in a taxi. How you leave—on a Greyhound or in a more luxurious vehicle—will depend entirely on how well you fare inside. You're given $1,000 in chips to play with, and, if you ever go bust, you're ushered out of the building and you leave Las Vegas hanging your head in shame.

The diversions available to you are: video poker, blackjack, the wheel of fortune, roulette and the slot machines. Some of the games have no betting limit, so it's possible to walk on in and double your money in seconds. Video poker and the one-armed bandits come in a variety of minimum bets; the others have no minimum. Craps and keno are nowhere to be found, which was somewhat of a disappointment...craps, especially, is a time-honored casino dice game that should really be included in any so-called collection of gambling games.

The games are reasonably authentic. Roulette has a full-featured betting table, which allows for a lot of strategic betting, but, unlike blackjack and poker, roulette is totally a game of luck. Poker requires minimal strategy, and blackjack requires the most of all, but some elements are missing. For instance, you can't double down and you can't split, except for certain combinations. These may actually be Caesar's house rules, but it still makes for a more simplistic, less interesting game.

Caesar's Palace cries out for battery backup or a password feature. You can spend hours building up a huge amount of cash, but you eventually have to turn off your NES and lose everything. It would be much more realistic and conducive to long-term enjoyment to be able to cash out and then return on another night to work on increasing your winnings. The only little nugget you get when you cash out is seeing what kind of transportation you can now afford.

While the graphics are functional (and not much more than that), the audio experience leaves everything to be desired. The music is brash and irritating, and most sound effects bear no resemblance to the sounds they're trying to mimic. Most are merely beeps or tones; the coins don't clink and the cards don't snap. However, occasional effects—the roulette wheel, the wheel of fortune—are a bit more realistic.

There's some basic game playing entertainment in *Caesar's Palace*, but it doesn't quite live up to its first-class namesake. Right now, this is one of those "no-frills" castles.

—Josh Mandel

Virgin Games
18001 Cowan, Suites A & B
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 833-8710

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Andy and Chris both agreed that *Caesar's Palace* is a no-frills casino simulator at a good price; Dave wondered why it has toilets but no crap tables.

Captain America and the Avengers

DATA EAST

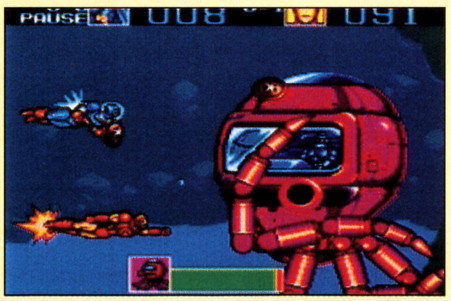
For the Sega Genesis ($54.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Captain America and the Avengers is an amazingly clutzy translation of the arcade coin-op, which was pretty amazingly clutzy, too, when you think about it. Firstly, this superhero beat-a-thon has only five levels of play. And, secondly, the game turns into a montage of flickerama when player characters clutter the screen. The programmers apparently were slumming on the name recognition of the coin-op—not wise, considering the source. What resulted would have been barely playable, if not for the simultaneous two-player option.

The neo-Nazi Red Skull and his robot goons have built a laser cannon on the moon that's aimed at the Earth, and he's threatening to blow up cities and such with this shiny new lunar-based toy. So call the X-Men! Well, perhaps they're too busy with previously scheduled missions, because, instead, the Avengers are sent to kick robo-Nazi butt. (Sheesh! What about a more interesting super-team, like the Fantastic Four or Alpha Flight?)

The Avengers comprise Captain America, Iron Man, The Vision and Hawkeye. Cappy throws his star-spangled shield at enemies; Shellhead fires energy blasts from his palms; Hawkeye shoots arrows; and The Vision thinks really hard so that lethal light beams emanate from his forehead.



The action starts in the city, where all the citizens flee in panic. One or two of the Avengers go through, sweeping the streets of killer 'bots by blowing them away or throwing stuff at them like chemical barrels that so happen to be on the sidewalk.

Later, the Avenger characters ride the skies on hoverbikes or fly by their own ability. Lots more robots need to be decomissioned—and an evil aircraft, too. The super guys will also accessorize with scuba gear for a water rumble. Eventually, all this traveling ends up on the moon. The heroes blow up the cannon, and continue on to face the Red Skull himself. There are boss characters to bring down at the end of every level and often during the progression through one.

Game controls are difficult to handle. Throwing or firing your character's personal weapon requires pressing two buttons at once. Leaping the hero through the air and having him attack with his weapon at the same time is a frustrating effort.

The game might not duplicate the look of the coin-op well, but it does re-create the obnoxious digitized voices to a tee. "You can't escape!" Captain America declares, while assuming an authoritative stance. "You'll be the one escaping!" responds the villain. Then there's, "You came here to die!" With cheesy comic-book clichés like these, you half expect to see Stan Lee himself appear on the screen to give us his nonsensical sign-off, "Excelsior!"

Attention, true believers: Double up with a friend to rent, play and beat *Captain America and the Avengers*. Then get on with what's important—like reading real comic books instead of playing really dumb ones.

—Howard Wen

Data East USA
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EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Mike didn't like the raspy sound and how the animation froze between scenes. Chris figured we could call him an idiot, but he liked this one (then gave it a 7).

LETHAL WEAPON™

Screens shown are from the SNES version of the game.

Excitement and adventure are back as Murtaugh and Riggs, once again, fight chaos and mayhem in the streets of Los Angeles. Conquer thugs and thieves, and overcome tricky obstacles in this action-packed, crime-fighting adventure you don't want to miss!

The name of the game

ocean®

Ocean of America, Inc.
1855 O'Toole Ave.
Suite D-102
San Jose, CA 95131

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PART TWO

A CRISIS IN PARADISE

A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO

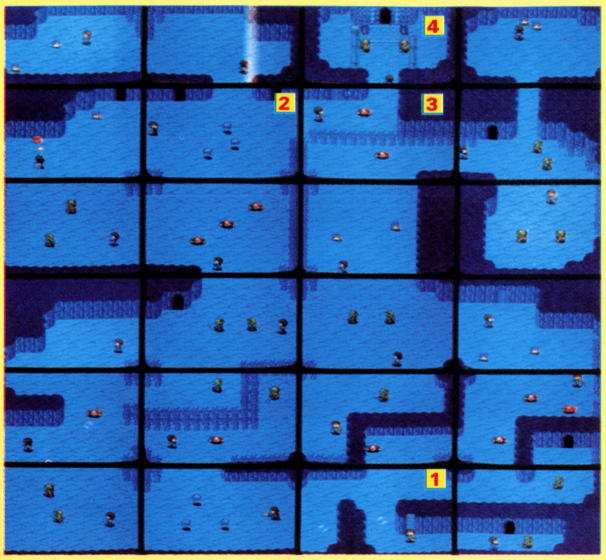
NEUTOPIA II

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DEES

FOR THE TurboGrafx-16

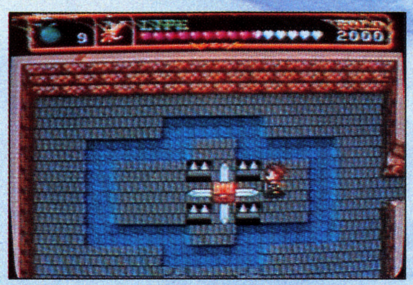
This month, we'll conclude our trek through the exciting world of Neutopia, exploring four new dungeons and five new countries. Our work is cut out for us, but, in the end, we'll finally confront Dirth, the Emperor of Darkness. And like heroes who have gone before, with a little luck we can make the world safe again for all peace-loving folk. Let's get to it.

BY CLAYTON WALNUM



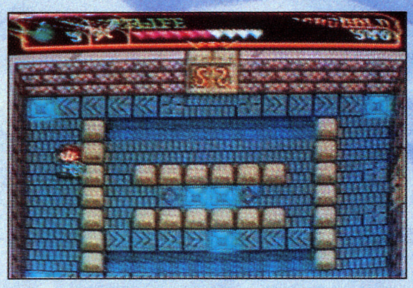
SEA OF AKESHI MAP KEY

1. Exit
2. Password
3. Healing
4. Pladon Labyrinth



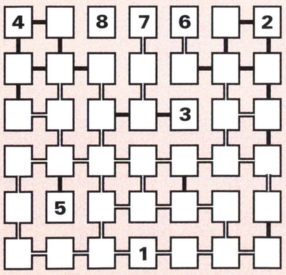
In the dungeons, treasures may not always be what they seem to be.

Special plates in the floors may trigger all types of devices, including booby traps.



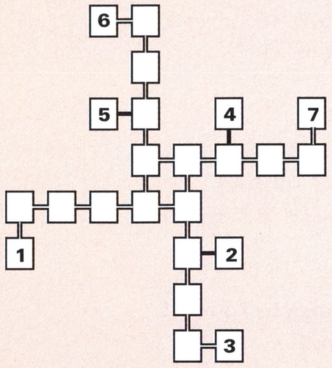
And transporter squares will zap you instantly from one place to another.

FOUR STATUES LABYRINTH

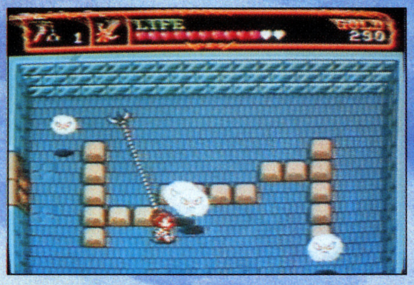


1. Exit
2. Gold Armor
3. Key
4. Medicine
5. Crystal Ball
6. Bombs
7. Boss
8. Medallion

PLADON LABYRINTH

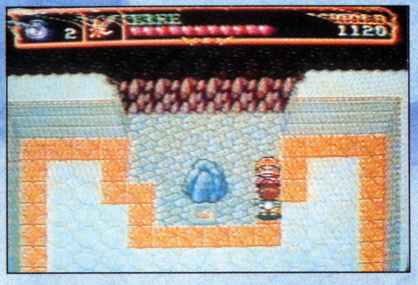


1. Exit
2. Bombs
3. Crystal Ball
4. Medicine
5. Key
6. Silver Armor
7. Boss



As you explore the dungeons, remember that you have more than one type of weapon at your disposal.

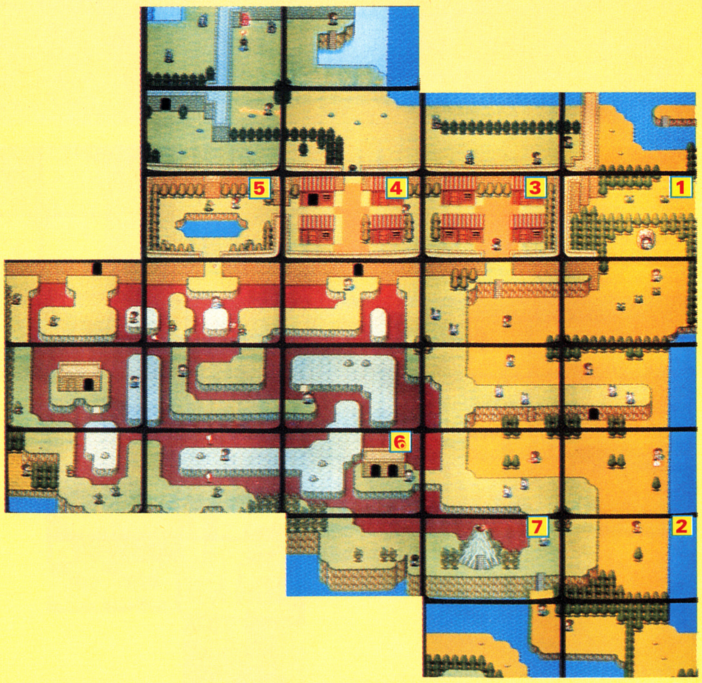
When you defeat Pladon's boss, the dreaded Kraken, you will receive the Legendary Sword from Jazeta.



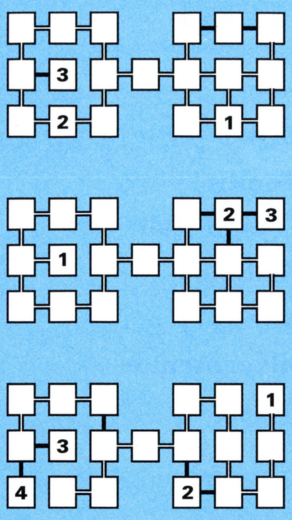
After finishing Pladon Labyrinth, you can open a door to a new country.

HIROHIRO PLAIN MAP KEY

1. Exit
2. Heart
3. Password, Healing and Medicine
4. Bombs
5. Lightening Staff
6. Password
7. Volcano



TWO TOWERS LABYRINTH

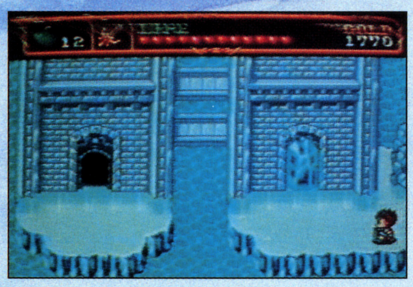


1. Exit
2. Stairs Out
3. Stairs to Level 2
4. Medicine

1. Stairs to Level 1
2. Crystal Ball
3. Stairs to Level 3

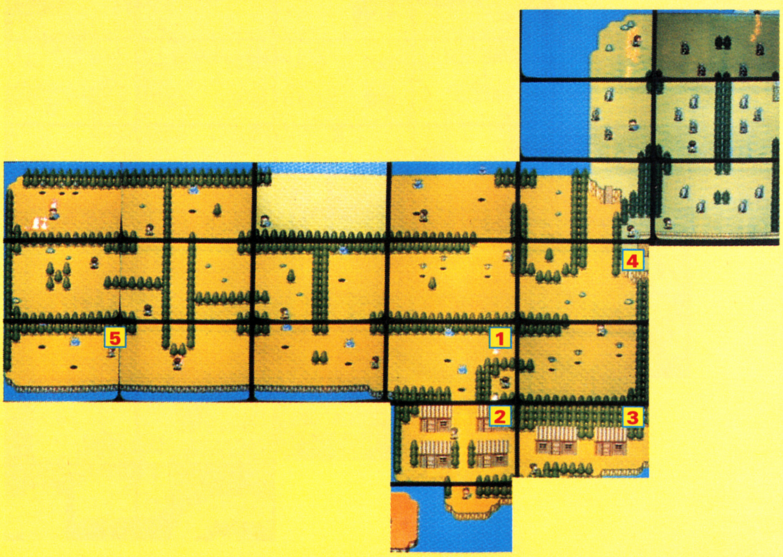
1. Stairs to Level 2
2. Bombs
3. Key
4. Stairs to Level 2

Underneath this pond, you'll find the powerful Lightning Staff.



In the frozen wastes of Buroburo, you'll find these twin towers, but...

...to get in, you must use fire to melt the ice blocking the door.

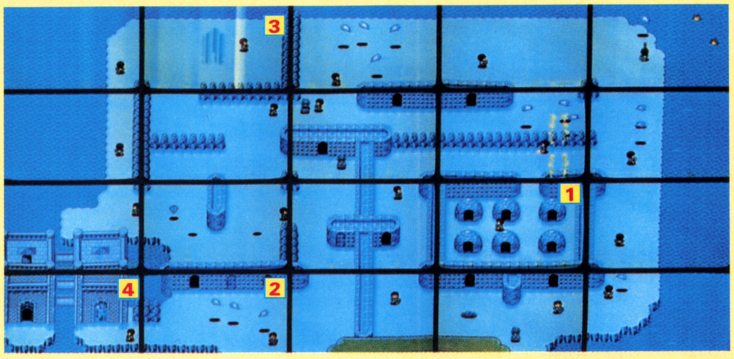


PEPAI MEADOW MAP KEY

1. Hold More Bombs
2. Boomerangs
3. Password, Healing, and Medicine
4. Bombs
5. Laboratory

BUROBURO PLATEAU MAP KEY

1. Password, Healing, Medicine, and Bombs
2. Password & Healing
3. Frozen Giant
4. Twin Towers



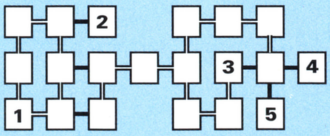
Medusa is a formidable opponent.

When you beat her, you'll get the Bell of Heaven.

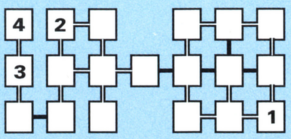
Use the flute to awaken the frozen giant, who will give you the yellow medallion.

TWO TOWERS LABYRINTH

(continued)



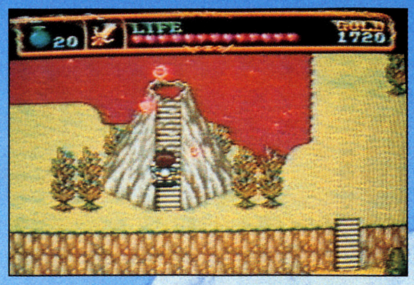
1. Stairs to Level 3
2. Medicine
3. Flute of Murdock
4. Gold Shield
5. Stairs to Level 5



1. Stairs to Level 4
2. Medicine
3. Boss
4. Bell of Heaven and Stairs

Under these five trees...

...hides this scientist, who will give you the Magic Hand.



With the Magic Hand, you can get into the volcano.

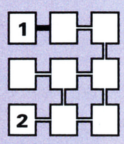
Inside the volcano, you'll battle the Fire Salamander. When you defeat him, you'll get extra life, as well as the red medallion.

After getting rid of Salamander, this island will break away from the mainland and take you to Sarasara Desert.

In the desert, four statues will move together to form the entrance to Four Statues Labyrinth.

PYRAMID LABYRINTH

(continued)

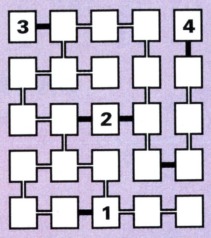


1 Bronze Sword
2 Bronze Shield

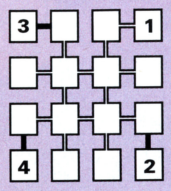
1 Medicine
2 Bombs

With all the medallions in hand, you're ready to reveal Pyramid Labyrinth, in which Dirth resides. At the end of this labyrinth, you'll face your final battle. Good luck!

PYRAMID LABYRINTH



1. Exit
2. Crystal Ball
3. Bombs
4. Stairs to Level 2



1. Stairs to Level 1
2. Medicine
3. Key
4. Stairs to Level 3

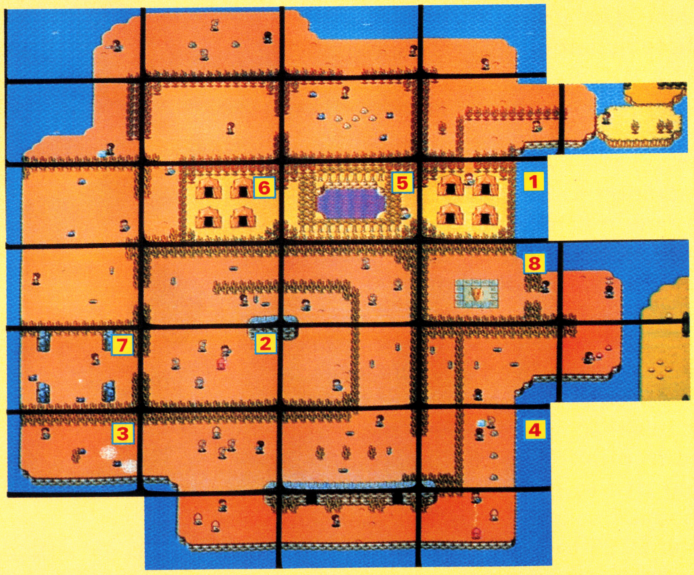
Four Statues Labyrinth is the home of this bizarre beast.

When you defeat him, you'll get the green medallion.

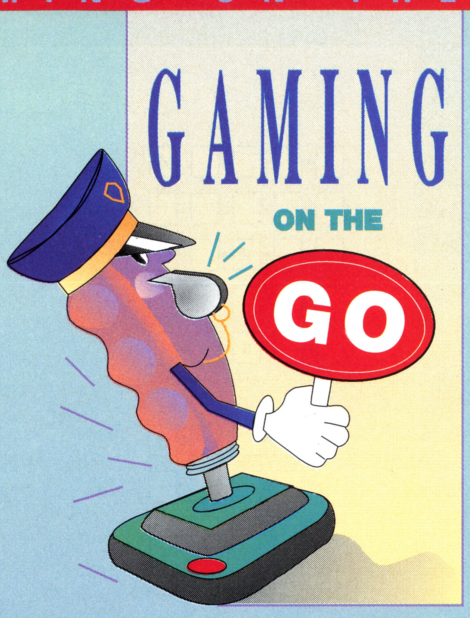
Below this pond, you must battle a giant jellyfish, who holds the secret of the blue medallion.

SARASARA DESERT MAP KEY

1. Password & Healing
2. Password
3. Heart
4. Healing
5. Lake
6. Bombs & Medicine
7. Four Statues
8. Pyramid Labyirnth



GAMING ON THE GO



BY
CHRIS BIENIEK

To welcome in the new year, this month's edition of *Gaming on the Go* offers the usual coverage of the portable video-game scene, plus a special look at a new handheld system that just hit the store shelves in this country. I hope that 1992 has been as good to you as it has been to me, and I hope that one of your friends or family members has the title of a Game Boy, Game Gear or Lynx game written next to your name on his or her holiday shopping list. In the meantime, get those batteries charged up, 'cause here we go....

Supervision

WATARA
Portable Video-Game System ($49.95)

Well, it's been awhile since somebody released a new video-game machine in this country. (No, the Turbo Duo doesn't count; it's just a TurboGrafx-16 in disguise.) The latest cartridge-based system to see the light of day is Watara's Supervision, a low-priced Game Boy-type machine that has made quite a splash in Europe since its introduction there in March of 1992. Like Nintendo's portable machine, the Supervision features A, B, **START** and **SELECT** buttons, an eight-way control pad, contrast and volume controls, a built-in speaker, a connector port for two-player games and a greenish LCD screen.

So what are the advantages and disadvantages? Judging by the box copy and promotional materials that describe the system as "The Portable Video-Game System With the Giant Screen," the Supervision's 2⅜" x 2⅜" display is its strongest selling point. It's noticeably larger than the Game Boy's 1 27/32" x 1⅝" screen, even though the resolution is roughly the same on both machines (160 x 160 on the Supervision vs. 160 x 144 for the Game Boy). In addition to being perfectly square, the new machine's screen is a more traditional LCD-green, as opposed to the Gatorade color of the Game Boy display.

Another advantage is the base unit's low retail price. Even though Nintendo is expected to cut the cost of its portable machine to make it more realistic in relation to the lowered sale price of the full-sized Super NES, nobody is selling Game Boy software in the $9.95 to $16.95 range, which is where Supervision software is expected to come in. The $49.95 Supervision package includes the base unit, a pair of awful flea market-quality "bud" earphones, four AA batteries and a *Crystball* cartridge. An external power supply and a two-player linkup cable are expected to appear in the future, as is a special adapter that will supposedly allow players to connect the Supervision to a TV set.

Finally, my favorite feature of the new system is its ability to pivot at its center. The upper portion of the machine can be bent forward at a slight angle, which makes for easier viewing of the screen and, in some cases, allows you to compensate for poor lighting conditions. Interestingly, this feature is not mentioned anywhere except in the one-sheet instruction manual inside the box: "Machine is bendable," it says in tiny type.

Watara's Supervision offers another option to those wanting portable play.

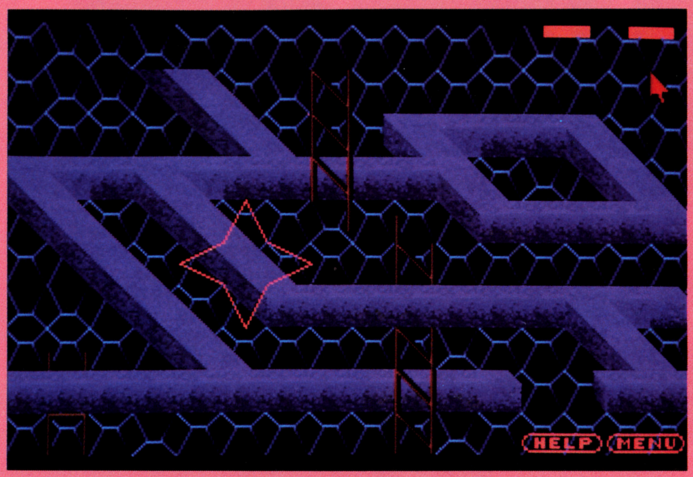
Now for the bad news. First of all, the Supervision's gray, black, red and teal color scheme makes for a pretty ugly-looking machine. And, though the graphics appear to be on par with Game Boy stuff, the squawking music and sound effects generated by its sound chip are so tinny, hokey and scratchingly irritating that it makes the Game Boy sound like a CD player. Honestly, I've heard musical greeting cards that sound better than this thing. Astoundingly, the Supervision's "High Quality Stereo Sound" is trumpeted by those exact words right on the face of the machine! Well, there are stereo effects, but they don't make the audio any more listenable.

The Supervision's overhyped features point out what I believe to be the biggest obstacle in the machine's path to success. It appears that the Supervision's North American distributor, Goldnation (USA) Inc., is seriously underestimating the intelligence of the game-buying public, not to mention the professionalism of the competition. Just look at the box: It boldly lists specifications that exaggerate the size of the screen by 16.6%. Even worse, our copy of the box bears a giant yellow sticker with the following "important" notice: "For positive directional responses, must apply pressure on the 4 dots on the directional control (red button)."

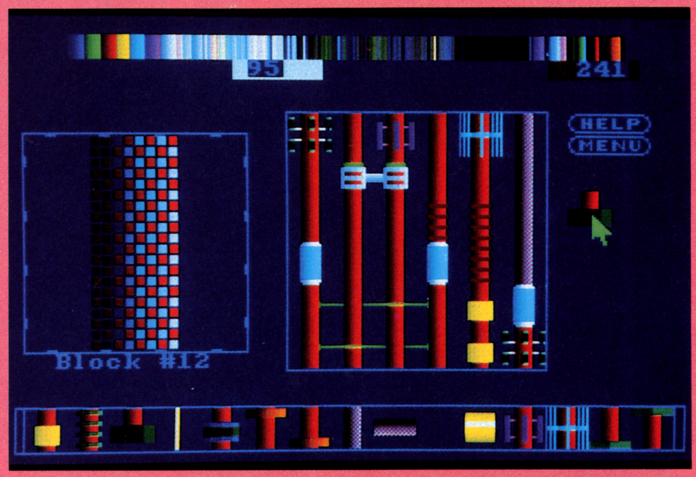
Eh? Come on, folks—kids know how to play video games, and they're going to know that the Supervision is a Game Boy wannabe right from the start. They're going to recognize the software, too; at press time we've only seen two games, *Crystball* and *P52 Sea Battle*, and they're both clones of ancient coin-ops, *Breakout* and *Air/Sea Battle*, respectively. Until Watara can deliver software that can compete with the most dynamic Game Boy titles—*Faceball 2000*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, *Battletoads* and *Tiny Toon Adventures* all come to mind—it's going to be surprised by the lack of acceptance of this new system.

But all is not lost. Goldnation has announced that 60 titles will be available for play on the Supervision during its first year. We'll have to wait and see if Watara can deliver that much

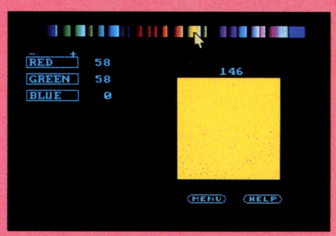
YOU THOUGHT YOU LOVED COMPUTER GAMES. BUT...



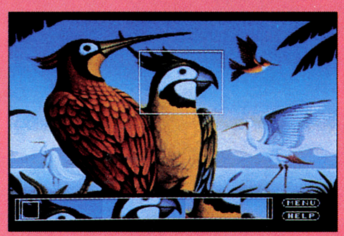
Easily construct complex worlds. Each scene can be over 62 times as big as your screen.



Draw pictures of characters, monsters, and scenes by creating picture blocks.

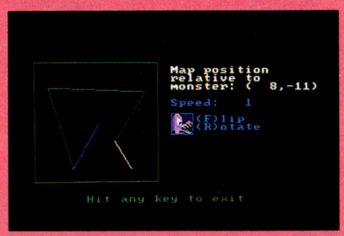


Design Palettes



Import Graphics

Animate Monsters



Plan Movement

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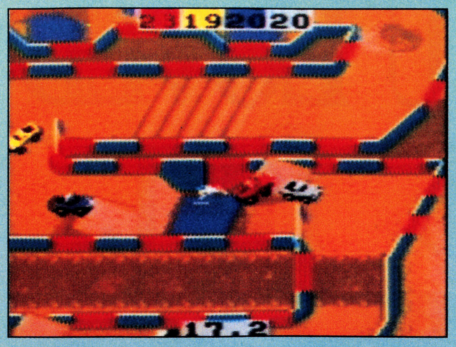

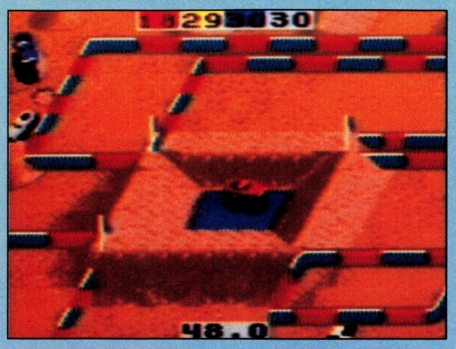

Virgin nicely converted Leland's *Super Off-Road* to the Game Gear.

product quickly enough to stir up consumer interest; in the meantime, it appears to be making an effort to line up third-party software developers for the system. Don't expect to see too many heavy-hitters involved here, though B.I.T.S. (the European developer of such Game Boy titles as Acclaim's *Alien*^{3} and LJN's *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*) has reportedly expressed an interest in developing games for the Supervision.

Readers: Please let us know how you feel about this new machine. Should *Gaming on the Go* review Supervision software in the future? Remember, this is your magazine, and it's up to you to tell us what you expect from the pages of VG&CE. To sum up my feelings about the Supervision, it's an interesting machine that plays fairly well, but sounds terrible. If Goldnation's marketing agents can work within the limitations of the machine and not bother to try to convince us that it's more than an average game machine, there may be a niche out there for it. As is the case with any game system though, it's the software that's going to make or break the Supervision.

Goldnation (USA) Inc.
420 W. Florence Ave.
Inglewood, CA 90301
(310) 673-8866

Super Off-Road

VIRGIN

For the Sega Game Gear ($39.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

A slick conversion of the ageless Leland coin-op hit, Virgin's *Super Off-Road* for the Game Gear duplicates the instantly addictive appeal of the original. If you've never experienced the thrill of steering a rugged 4 x 4 through the twists and turns of man-made obstacle courses, now's your chance. Most of the elements of previous versions of the game are intact, from the ramps, pools and potholes that lie in your path to the costly-but-invaluable power-ups that can be purchased at the "Speed Shop" after each race.

No need to break open the instruction manual for this one—the controls are as instinctive as they are responsive to the touch. If I had to complain about the handling of the vehicles, I'd say they're almost *too* quick to respond to your control-pad commands. But I'll take this level of playability any day, despite the fact that it undermines the player's ability to think of these monster machines as real trucks, not small toys that can stop on a dime and change direction without warning.

While demonstrating a firm grasp of the capabilities of the Game Gear hardware, the programmers weren't afraid to dress the game up with a springloaded soundtrack and a very vivid presentation of what isn't traditionally thought of as a colorful contest. The bright red and blue barriers that line both sides of each course are easy on the eyes, as are the cheeky "spokesmodel" introduction and victory screens.

Like Tradewest's recent Game Boy translation, Virgin's *Super Off-Road* overcomes the limitations of the small screen to deliver a truly enjoyable arcade experience in a battery-powered box. Kudos to Rod Mack and Steve

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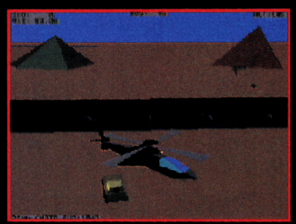

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SEGA GENESIS

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CIRCLE #139 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Turner of Graftgold Creative Software, who developed this Game Gear version of a future hall-of-fame game.

Virgin Games Inc.
18061 Fitch Ave.
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 833-8710

Dirty Larry: Renegade Cop

ATARI

For the Atari Lynx ($39.99)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							■			
GRAPHICS								■		
PLAYABILITY							■			
OVERALL							■			

While showing the Lynx to a friend several months ago, I asked him what his favorite kind of video game was. I had spaceship games, puzzle games, *Super Mario*-type games and arcade titles to show him, and I was a bit surprised when he asked if I had any games where the player controls "a guy with a gun." I was even more surprised to discover that I had no Lynx game that could be described that way; Atari's catalog is strangely thin in this particular genre.

It's too bad that *Dirty Larry: Renegade Cop* had not been available at that time, 'cause it's exactly the game my friend was looking for. As the title character (a rumpled sort who can be seen sprawled out in sunglasses, handgun and boxer shorts at the game's title screen), you'll walk the streets of Steelburg, USA, on the trail of drug dealers, crooked public servants and any other suspicious character you feel like shooting at. With bare knuckles or bullets, you'll fight knife-wielding hoodlums, bearded bikers and killer clowns who stalk the subways with baseball bats.

No easy game, *Dirty Larry* counterbalances the intense punch-and-shoot action of Larry's workday with cleverly animated intermissions and some super-strange enemies. Being slugged by an overweight woman wearing too much makeup is good for a laugh, but can somebody explain the shaggy-haired Nirvana reject who bursts into flames and chases after you like a leftover stuntman from Ron Howard's *Backdraft*?

***Dirty Larry: Renegade Cop* isn't a Clint Eastwood license, but it is one of the few "guy with a gun" Lynx games.**

Though it's generally a well-designed game—as evidenced by the careful *Xenophobe*-style stereo placement of each sound effect—*Dirty Larry: Renegade Cop* is not much more than an extremely simplistic kill-'em-all contest. It doesn't have the zany sense of humor that carried *Kung Food*, nor is it blessed with the name recognition of *Batman Returns*. But it succeeds on the same level as those two titles, and, if you can overlook the main character's slightly stiff movements and the plot's relentlessly linear structure, there's plenty of action here for Lynx owners.

Atari Corporation
1196 Borregas Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94089
(408) 745-2000

Our sincerest apologies to the readers who tuned in expecting to see the review of the Game Gear version of *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* that we promised—we haven't received a review copy as of press time. Maybe next issue, eh?

Reader feedback to this column is always appreciated. Send your comments and suggestions to: VIDEO GAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, Attn: *Gaming on the Go*, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Computer owners with access to the DELPHI infor-mation service can also contact me via electronic mail sent to user name VGCHRIS, or stop by the "World of Video Games" special interest group and drop me a note in the public forum.

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MARKETING TO GAMERS: IT TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE

BY LOU VIVEROS

Gaming is a passion; either you've got it or you haven't. Fortunately for the $6-billion video-game industry, more than 80 million American consumers are *victims* of the gaming bug, according to Nintendo of America. While the actual count of truly committed "gamers" is likely well below NOA's number, there's no denying the fact that one out of every three households in this country plays host to at least one video-game system.

With so many gamers amongst us as a nation, it is the video-game industry's greatest irony that an inordinate number of video-game marketing personnel aren't necessarily gamers. Beyond this, most of the outsiders hired by marketing personnel to actually create video-game packaging and advertising don't qualify as gamers, even by Nintendo's loose standards.

It's an issue that can at times leave real gamers, our market's product-consuming life source, feeling out of touch with—and abused by—the industry they so strongly support. This is the case particularly when it comes to packaging and advertising that fails to adequately satisfy the game play-information needs of dedicated gamers.

Through the newly formed Games Marketing Ratings (GaMeR) Survey, American video gamers now have an opportunity to help shape the packaging and advertising direction of some of the industry's leading video-game software publishers.

WHERE ARE ALL THE GAMERS?

I get calls weekly from clients and contacts within the video-game industry all trying to get a lead on the same commodity: "a good marketing person who really understands games." How can it be that this species is so rare?

There is, of course, the generational divide between gamers and non-gamers, as very few people over the age of 35 have really experienced the consumer side of the gaming phenomenon. Consider also that most "true" gamers within the industry eventually find their way to the product-development side of the business where they can be "with their own kind." As Mike Suarez, former Electronic Arts and Activision product manager turned game producer (*Michael Jordan Flight*), explained to me years ago, "The sales and marketing suits would rather play business than play games."

Topping it all off is the fact that the video-game industry is simply not yet old enough to have spawned and nurtured a large pool of marketing talent with hands-on video-game experience. Even going "way back" to the early days of the Magnavox Odyssey in the mid-1970s, it's an industry that is not even two decades old. Add into this equation the market's complete and total crash in 1984—when industry retail sales nosedived from $3 billion to $100 million over a two-year period, leaving very few survivors—and we're talking about an industry where less than a decade of experience makes you a founding father of game software product marketing.

There are more than 100 companies marketing video games in the U.S., but you can count off the industry's marketing veterans in less than a minute:

Rob Holmes of Acclaim
Al Nilsen of Sega
Bing Gordon of Electronic Arts
Mark Beaumont of The Software Toolworks
Ray Musci of Ocean
Emil Heidkamp of Konami
Phil Adam of Interplay

It's no coincidence that during that minute of naming names you'll have also reeled off a list of the industry's top companies—most of which are Viveros and Associates clients, again, by no coincidence.

THE NEW BREED

In many ways, the void of people with gaming experience has actually helped expand the horizons of video-game marketing, since many of the industry's current marketing executives have been drawn from a diverse and successful array of complementary industries: toys, movies, publishing, packaged goods and so on.

For most of them, the transition is easy. The actual marketing process changes very little from one business to another. But the fact remains that you just can't *learn* games overnight.

The unique, interactive nature of video games, which even Hollywood is still yet to fully grasp (but that's another essay altogether), requires an in-depth understanding of the gaming mentality in order to truly communicate with gamers.

In short, it takes one to know one, especially when it comes to packaging and advertising.

GIVE IT TO 'EM STRAIGHT

Research clearly shows that hard-core gamers—those who make up the subscriber bases of publications like VG&CE, and alone account for purchases of more than 12 million video-game software units annually—can't be bought with Madison Avenue "spin" or award-winning "design value." Coming from a classic "big agency" upbringing in the Ogilvy & Mather organization, I learned that lesson first-hand back at the outset of the Nintendo 8-bit surge.

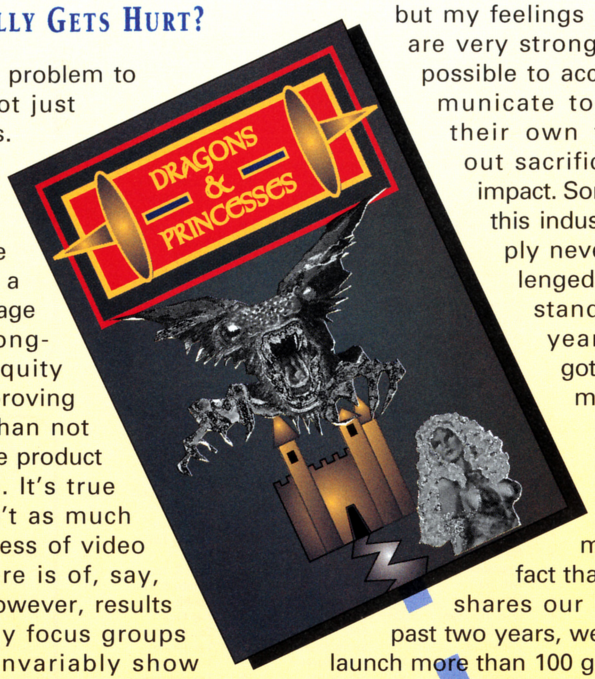
Basically, gamers want it straight: screen shots, key game play features and, mostly, an accurate depiction of the game itself.

There's nothing worse for a gamer (yes, I am under 35) than laying down hard-earned cash for a game, only to plug it in and find out that whoever created the package art was either on drugs or never even saw the game. It's usually the latter, but not always.

At that point, you're totally hosed. Maybe you didn't notice the big "Abso-

lutely No Returns On Video Games" sign at your retailer?

Who Really Gets Hurt?



It's a tough problem to solve—and not just for consumers. Despite the publisher's gain from the unreturnable sale in such a case, the damage done to its long-term brand equity may end up proving more costly than not having sold the product to begin with. It's true that there isn't as much brand awareness of video games as there is of, say, toothpaste. However, results of the monthly focus groups we conduct invariably show *tremendous* recall of games—and brands—that consumers felt misled them into a purchase they otherwise wouldn't have made.

The Real Culprits

Rarely, if ever, is there a conscious effort made by publishers to mislead consumers. After all, it's simply a marketing manager's job to present his or her product in an appealing manner that separates that product from the crowd.

The problem usually begins with the marketing manager's outside vendors. Very few publishers are equipped to handle packaging and advertising in-house, and must, therefore, farm these tasks out. For most, it's very difficult to find outside help that really understands every aspect of the video-game business.

The end result is that the most vital packaging and advertising link between publishers and consumers ends up in the hands of the ultimate nongamers: graphic artists and designers, who generally have no product-marketing experience and even less knowledge of games. Lacking an understanding of key game play benefits and baseline marketing objectives, most designers make it their primary mission to have *their* video-game ads and packages win artsy-fartsy awards. To most of them, it's more important to create a "portfolio piece" they can use in their own promotional calendar than it is to truly understand a product's unique position in the market.

Please excuse my honesty, but my feelings on this topic are very strongly held. It *is* possible to accurately communicate to gamers on their own terms without sacrificing creative impact. Some vendors in this industry have simply never been challenged to meet that standard, and for years they have gotten away with mediocre work.

The success of Viveros and Associates is a testament to the fact that the industry shares our belief. In the past two years, we have helped launch more than 100 games into the marketplace for an ever-increasing number of publishers who share our vision of the gaming consumer. Now, as the leading marketing-services firm in the entire industry, we're pleased to support an elite group of software publishers no longer willing to accept mere "turn-and-burn" designers to do the work of marketing professionals.

And now that we've got the industry's ear, we plan to let gamers speak into it.

The Importance of Listening

A major factor in our success has been our aggressive stance on focus-group testing. At every step of the packaging and advertising process, we seek honest opinions from a qualified group of *real* gamers. More importantly, we incorporate their input, regardless of our own opinions. I would rather admit an idea isn't working—six 15-year-olds saying "That sucks" in unison is usually a good indication of this—than let personal ego shape a package that, well, sucks.

With the creation of the GaMeR Survey, we enable hundreds of gamers around the country to rate advertising and packaging for us on a monthly basis. Their input and suggestions are communicated directly to our clients to help them better understand what the consumer thinks is working and why.

If you are interested in being part of the GaMeR Survey and letting videogame publishers know your opinions of their packaging and advertising, drop us a line at:

The GaMeR Survey
2401 Broadway
Redwood City, CA 94063.

Lou Viveros is the CEO of Viveros & Associates Inc. The former Activision sales and marketing exec's clients have included Acclaim/Arena, Electronic Arts, JVC, Konami, Sega, The Software Toolworks and Sony Imagesoft, among many others.

Each month, Inside Gaming *will be a sounding board of what's taking place within the electronic-gaming community, giving the game industry a chance to speak out on pertinent issues. It's not speculation written from the outside; rather, it's written by someone with knowledge from inside the business. The views and opinions stated in* Inside Gaming *do not necessarily reflect those of the staff of* VG&CE *or LFP Inc.*

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Baseball Stars 2	34	Darkman	10	Ghosts & Gblns	1
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Bee 52	22	Demon Sword	1	Golf Pebble Bch	4
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Imp Mission 2	6	Mighty Bmb Jck	2	Robo Cop	2
Ind Jns Doom	1	Millipede	14	Robo Cop 2	16
Ind Jns Lst Cr	12	Milon Sec Cstl	2	Robo Cop 3	24
Indy Heat	20	Mini Putt	24	Robo Demons	14
Infiltrator	2	Mission Cobra	12	Robo Warriors	2
Iron Sword	1	Mission Imp	2	Rock N Ball	4
Iron Tank	1	Monopoly	18	Rocket Ranger	1
Isolated Warr	6	Monst Trk Rly	16	Rocketeer	10
Jack & Bnstlk	22	Monster Party	3	Rockin' Kats	20
Jack Nick Golf	8	Monster/Pocket	20	Rocky	22
Jackal	2	Moon Crystal	22	Rocky & Blwnkle	22
Jackie Chan Kf	8	Moon Ranger	22	Rog Clmns Bsbl	10
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Jet Bike Sim	22	Muscle	1	Romnc 3 Kngdms	10
Jetsons	22	Mutant Virus	14	Romnc 3 Kngs 2	34
Joe & Mac	22	Mystery Quest	3	Roundball	24
John E Qback	2	NARC	3	Rush N Attack	1
Jordan vs Bird	3	Nascar Chall	16	Rygar	1
Journey Silius	2	Natl Ftbl Lg	6	Scat	6
Joust	3	NES Open	18	Secret Scout	16
Karate Champ	1	Nghtmr Elm St	6	Secret Storm	14
Karate Kid	1	Nightshade	14	Secret Ties	22
Karnov	2	Ninja Crsdrs	8	Section Z	1
Kickle Cubicle	16	Ninja Gaiden	1	Seicross	4
Kickmaster	6	Ninja Gaiden 2	4	Sesame St 123	12
Kid Icarus	3	Ninja Gaiden 3	14	Sesame St ABC	12
Kid Kool	4	Ninja Kid	1	Sesame St Ctdn	26
Kid Niki	2	Noahs Ark	22	Shadow Ninja	4
King Neptune	16	Nobun Ambtn	10	Shadowgate	2
King Of Kings	18	Nobun Ambtn 2	34	Shatterhand	12
King's Knight	1	North & South	16	Shingen Ruler	3
Kings Of Beach	3	Nosferatu*	22	Shinobi	4
Kings Qst 5	16	Operation Wolf	2	Shock Wave	4
Kiwi Kraze	12	Orb 3D	1	Shogun Maeda	22
Klash Ball	18	Othello	6	Shooting Range	6
Klax	14	Over Horizon	22	Short Order	8
Knight Rider	3	Overlord	22	Side Pocket	8
Krazy Krtrs	20	P Radicus	6	Silent Assault	12
Krion Conquest	3	Pacman	10	Silent Service	3
Krustys FH	26	Pacmania	30	Silk Worm	6
Kung Fu	1	Palamedes	8	Silver Surfer	3
Kung Fu 2	22	Panic Rstrnt	22	Simpsons 1	8
Kung Fu Heroes	2	Paperboy	6	Simpsons 2	12
L'empereur	30	Paperboy 2	24	Smpsons B vs RM	22
Laser Invasion	8	Perfect Fit	10	Skate Or Die	1
Last Ninja	6	Pesterminator	6	Skate Or Die 2	4
Last Starfighter	8	Petr Pan Pirts	14	Ski Or Die	12
Legacy Of Wiz	1	Phntm Fighter	1	Skull & Crsbns	3
Legend Of Kage	1	Pictionary	8	Sky Kid	4
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Legends Dmnd	20	Pinball Quest	8	Slalom	1
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Litl Lg Bsbl	8	Play Act Ftbl	2	Snow Brothers	30
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TMNT 3	22				
Tennis	3				
Terminator	22				
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Crue Ball	24
Cyber Cop	28
Cyberball	6
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Galaxy Force 2	8
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Ghouls Ghosts	12
Gods	24
Golden Axe	4
Goldn Ax 2	10
Golf	10
Granada	3
Granada 2	26
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Growl	20
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Hardball	4
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Hooves of Thndr	26
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Phant Star 2	14
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Pigskin Ftbrwl	24
Pitfighter	14
Populous	6
Power Monger	24
Powerball	6
Predator 2	18
Quackshot	12
Quad Challenge	16
Race Drivin'	26
Raiden Trad	10
Rambo 3	6
Rampart*	22
Rastan Saga 2	6
RBI Bsbl 3	12
RBI Bsbl 4	24
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Simpsons-B vs SM	20
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Smash TV	26
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Solo Flight	26
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Sonic Hdghog 2	32
Sorcers Kingdom	24
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Star Control	10
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Steel Empire	8
Steel Talons	24
Stormlord	4
Stormlord 2	26
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DESTINATION ARCADIA

THE 43RD ANNUAL AMOA SHOW

the latest in coin-ops

BY DAVID S. MOSKOWITZ

The Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA) held its annual convention at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee, October 1-3, 1992. This year especially, the AMOA show had a very different tone to it than the larger Consumer Electronics Show. Unlike the CES, where the business was kept mostly behind closed doors, all 204 exhibiting companies were hungry to deal. Nobody is denying that the coin-op industry has gone through some tough times, with the exception of Capcom's *Street Fighter II*, which has inspired a new set of clones. Games were not described in terms of graphics or sound effects, but compatibility with existing shells and expected gross profits.

The pessimism of the last few shows was, however, tempered by two major trends: the reemergence of pinball, spearheaded by Williams' games like the *Addams Family*, and the growing surge in "redemption" machines. Unlike normal games where players aim for high scores or simply to play as long as they can on one quarter—or, more commonly, two quarters—redemption games that award tickets for prizes are becoming more popular.

Video games themselves are of two types: dedicated and kit. In dedicated games, the software and controls are permanently fused to the shell surrounding them and only that dedicated game can be played on one machine. Kits are controller and software combinations that can be used interchangeably with a number of stand-up shells. If you ever played a game that wasn't the same as the decals located on the game's side, you know it's a kit.

AMOA had a few awards of its own to give at an awards ceremony featuring Peter Noone (Herman's Hermits), Barbara Mandrell and surprise appearances by award-winners Garth Brooks (Jukebox Country CD) and Bob Seger (Jukebox Legends Hall of Fame).

On the gaming side, the most-played dedicated video game was *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition* (Capcom). The most-played pinball machine was *Addams Family* (Midway) and the most played conversion kit was *Wrestle Fest* (American Technos). The award for best new equipment went to *Lethal Enforcers* (Konami), and Williams' electronic self-help pinball flippers took most innovative technology. Though it was patented in 1909, *Skeeball* was voted most-played redemption game.

What follows are the latest pinball and video games that should show up in your arcades within the next few months.

ALVIN G. & CO.

Following the success of *A.G. SoccerBall* overseas, Alvin has created *U.S.A. Football* for the United States. Both machines feature what pinball fans have been waiting far too long for: head-to-head competition. Players each stand at opposite ends of the machine with a set of flippers and a goal to protect. This gives them three objectives: 1) getting more goals than the opponent, 2) getting a high score via the standard bumper targets found throughout the playing field and 3) setting a record for goals scored.

***U.S.A. Football* offers head-to-head play action.**

ATARI

Atari is another company banking on demand for multiplayer games.

Above: *Moto Frenzy* lets players ride through six different tracks.
Right: *Space Lords* provides for a large host of aliens to be atomized.

Moto Frenzy has two bikes for players to sit on and "ride" through six different tracks, including one just outside of Las Vegas and one through rhino-infested Kenya. Two units may be connected allowing four-player simultaneous play. Also, with four players, all of them earn extended playtime as long as one of them completes the course in the allotted time.

Another four-player machine is flight simulator/shooter *Space Lords*. A single player may play controlling the thrust, firing, front view/rear view switch and nuclear missiles, but if a copilot signs on, the ship gains an extra gun and cloaking capabilities. *Space Lords* provides a host of aliens ready to be atomized.

The second player can also take control of an additional ship for a zero-G dogfight, and, if daring enough, one player can take on an opponent with a copilot for three-player play. *Space Lords* is a difficult game and will take time—and quarters—to learn how to fly properly, but it will be worth the investment.

Dragongun was Data East's other big draw. Especially impressive on a giant screen, this combines the best of the *T2*-style gun games with enough monstrous gore and violence to make anyone give up sword-wielding side scrollers for good.

Left: Data East's *Star Wars* pinball drew long lines at AMOA. Below: *Dragongun* combines a *T2*-style with lots of gore.

Capcom

One of the most financially successful vendors at the show, Capcom was ready with a new Turbo Kit modification for *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition*. This new *Turbo SFII* is up to 15% faster than unmodified machines and features a fireball-throwing Chun Li and a head-butting Balrog. M. Bison has also been toned down for more even battles.

Mark Schultz's hit black-and-white comic book *Xenozoic Tales* has been translated into the video game *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*. The game's a side-scrolling beat-'em-up (à la *Final Fight*) with one twist: The bad guys like to beat up and kill dinosaurs—especially when the good guys are near. The presence of a third foe hostile to everyone helps this one stand out.

Data East

Data East showed up with a row of *Lethal Weapon 3* pinball machines, but its hot item was the *Star Wars* pinball game. Both of them had lines too long for even the press to get a chance to play, but they sure sounded great.

Fabtek

Fabtek's *Seibu Cup Soccer* may be the game to prove that soccer is more popular in the U.S. than people realize. Allowing up to four players in a single game, *Soccer* features an assortment of teams for the players to beat, including a championship against the ultimate "boss," God.

Heated Barrel is a side-scrolling game in which players control one of four western characters fighting off bandits, hostile Indians and a host of wild animals in the Old West. It may not be politically correct; there are far too few western-themed electronic contests.

Above: *Seibu Cup Soccer*. Right: *Heated Barrel* is a side-scrolling western.

Gottlieb

Gottlieb has been experimenting with what might be called "redemption pinball." The *Super Mario Bros. Mushroom World* game has two flippers placed apart on a field covered with pits. If the ball falls in one of the pits, the player is greeted with a host of Mario sounds and tickets. It's not much of a game, but great for the ticket hungry.

Super Mario Bros. Mushroom World.

For regular pinball fans, Gottlieb offered *Cue Ball*. Possibly the most-played pinball machine of the show, *Cue Ball*'s central feature is a cue ball floating in the center of the board. Serving mostly as an obstacle to be avoided, the ball nevertheless could keep the pinball among the high-scoring targets at the top of the game.

Irem

Irem had two new games to show off. *Skins* is the American version of its golf game, which was an enormous hit in Europe. *Hook* is based on and has similarities to the movie, but isn't the same as the Sony Imagesoft SNES cartridge.

Top: *Skins* is a very popular golf game in Europe. Right: *Hook* is based on the movie.

Jaleco

One of the very few video games perfect for jocks and bodybuilders, Jaleco's *Arm Champs II* allows players to literally arm wrestle one of nine computerized opponents, each with a full array of great facial expres-

sions, depending on which direction the match is turning.

Wrestle with nine computerized opponents in *Arm Champs II*.

tized beauty has six gun-wielding players taking on bank robbers, ninjas, hijackers, drug dealers and other baddies in what is easily the best descendant of *Hogan's Alley* to date.

Konami's *Lethal Enforcers*.

McO'River

McO'River had nothing new to show and, according to its proudly displayed top-ten reprints of arcade games, it didn't need to. Its top scrolling shooter, *Aero Fighters*, continues to dominate the industry.

Namco

Namco's *Cracky Crab* was probably the best-received game for those who preferred their violence to be more physical. On the video-game side, Namco was proudest of its racing games. Stringing together rows of *Coca-Cola Suzuka 8 Hours* and *Final Lap 3*, Namco was the only manufacturer to hire a lap-by-lap roving announcer, who even interviewed the winners in front of the crowd of spectators. For motorbike fans, *Suzuka* was also the hit of the show, requiring players to lean as far as they could around the turns with no fears of actually ripping the flesh off their elbows and legs!

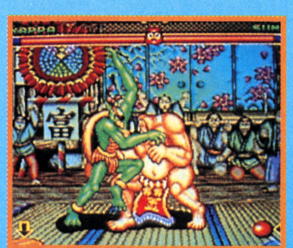
Sega

Sega was running hot and cold with its two big nonredemption games. Everyone who attended the show, including rival companies, made sure to get at least one ride in *Virtua Racing*. This polygon-based racing game allows players to watch the race from four different perspectives.

Sega's *Virtua Racing* is bound to be an arcade hit.

Kaneko

Like many other manufacturers, Kaneko has decided to play it safe and stick with established hits for its two big games. *Explosive Breaker* is a top-scrolling outer-space shooter with some rather odd bosses. Where else can you fight giant, blue forearms in deep space?



Kaneko's *Explosive Breaker* (top) and *Shogun Warriors* (above).

Shogun Warriors Buster is Kaneko's face-to-face beat-'em-up, with a much more heavily Asian theme than most of the *Street Fighter II* clones. *Shogun* features animation that isn't as clean as the rest, but has lush coloring that is unequaled.

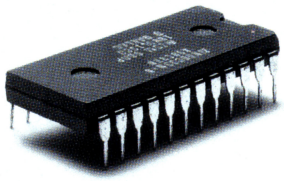
Konami

Konami's big draw was its award-winning *Lethal Enforcers*. This digi-

Namco's *Final Lap 3*.

Between this "floating" camera angle and the lightning quick processing of the graphics, *Virtua Racing* is certainly the next step forward in racing games. One thing, however: *VR* is an expensive game, so operators might be hesitant to carry it. Ask for *Virtua Racing*, it's worth it.

Sega didn't do quite as well with *Golden Axe: The Revenge of Death Adder*. Graphically more detailed than the



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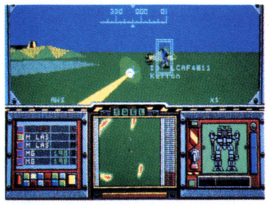

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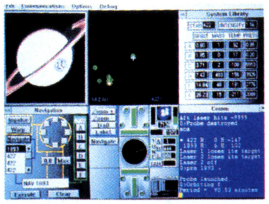

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Genesis games, it's as difficult to control—if not more so. Don't waste your quarters on this turkey.

Sega's *Virtua Racing* uses multiple camera angles.

STRATA

Easily the most violent and original of the *SFII* clones is *Time Killers*. Unlike the others in the genre, each of *Time Killers*' buttons controls a body part (two arms, two legs and a head butt). In addition to losing the standard "health" when hit, *Time Killers*' characters are also subject to amputation, forcing a change in strategy midway through the fight. Programmer Leif Marwede has also developed artificial intelligence so the game adjusts the combatants' strategy to the player. This makes *Time Killers* a tough game to complete, but prevents the "five-second quarters" that Marwede felt plagued the first-time game players of the competition.

Above: *Time Killers* is a new *Street Fighter II* clone by Strata. Right: A row of Neo•Geo coin-ops.

SNK

With *Art of Fighting* and *World Heroes* already in arcades, the SNK displays didn't draw the crowds the competition did. It also had an early version of *Viewpoint* showing, but AMOA attendees are there to buy, and the not-quite-finished game could secure little time in their playing agendas. (VG&CE has a complete review of *Viewpoint* on page 65.)

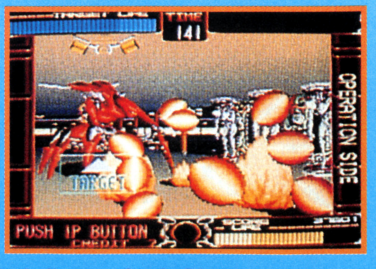
TAITO

Taito was at Nashville in full force with over five games to show convention goers. *Ring Rage* is a 32-bit wrestling brawl featuring digitized graphics. Up to four players moving all over the screen make this quite a technical advancement, but, unfortunately, *Ring Rage* was not terribly exciting to play.

Excitement and genuine violence are waiting for players of *Sonic Blastman*. Players put on genuine boxing gloves and hit a red padded target as hard as they can to defeat the enemies on the screen and save their innocent victims.

Featuring up to four players, *Operation Gunbuster* is a 3-D shoot-'em-up with *T2*-style controls. This is no standard shooter, however, since the game has movement controls, and players actually chase one another through high-tech steel-and-glass surroundings. Plenty of violence and smooth, fast graphics made this a great head-to-head game.

Oddly enough, one of Taito's best games might not even make it to America. *Fixeight* is a top-scrolling shooter with players choosing one of eight characters in an *Ikari Warriors*-style battle. In addition to the standard power-ups, *Fixeight* features "change plates" that alter dispersion of player shots. With unique enemies, moving platforms, a large variety of weapons and vivid color graphics, *Fixeight* was easily the best shooter in Nashville. Pester your arcade operator, pester Taito—do whatever is necessary



Taito's lineup: *Sonic Blastman* (top), *Fixeight* (second from top), *Ring Rage* (third from top) and *Gunbuster* (above).

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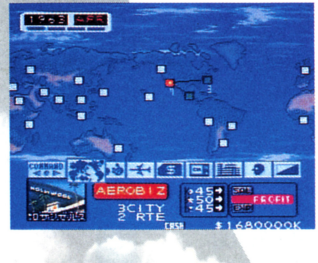

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in order to play this game. Trust me, it's worth it.

TECMO

Tecmo was another company playing it safe by offering two shooters: *Final Star Force: The Return of Gordess* and *Zing Zing Zip. Return* has a science-fiction theme, while *Zing* focuses on planes and missiles. Both games are competent, but otherwise nondescript.

Fish Tales, by Williams.

WILLIAMS

Fresh from hitting its sales record with *Addams Family*, Williams had a strong showing with its digitized *Mortal Kombat* video game and new pinball machine, *Fish Tales*. As featured in last month's *Destination Arcadia*, *Mortal Kombat* is a graphically stunning martial-arts game.

***Fish Tales'* playfield.**

Fish Tales is yet another solid pinball game with tracks crisscrossing an already busy playing surface. *Fish Tales* features even better video modes than the recently released *Black Rose*—including a torpedo segment. With a rod and reel, a "Stretch the Truth" meter and a boat in the middle of the action, *Fish Tales* was not the most popular pinball machine, but a strong contender for most enjoyable.

(Unfortunately, due to the AMOA show coverage this month, we won't be able to show you new Mortal Kombat *moves as previously promised. But we'll be back next month with continuing coverage. We apologize for any inconvenience this has caused.)*

Special thanks to Fred Newton and the other AMOA officers for a great awards show, plenty of access to the exhibitors and lots of Diet Coke in the pressroom. Next year's AMOA show will be closer to home—in Anaheim, California—and VG&CE will be there.

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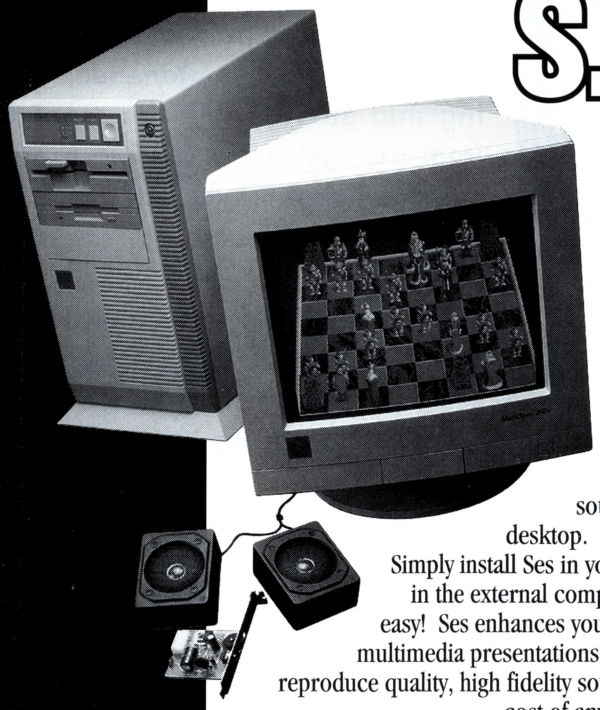

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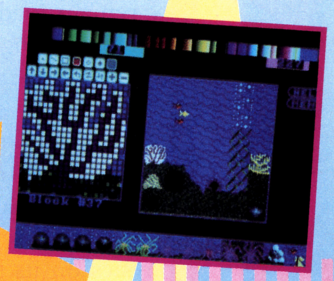

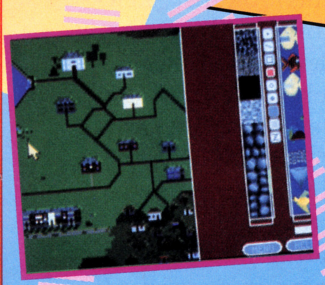

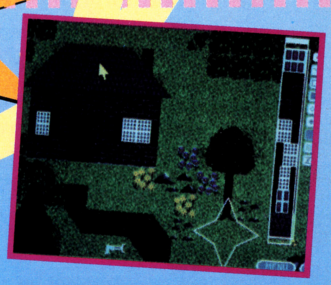

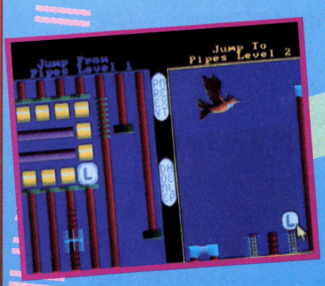

Many gamers would like to develop games, but are held back by the time, effort and specialized programming knowledge needed. The *Game-Maker* development tools have greatly simplified creation of full-color animated games, and the editors at VG&CE would like to see what game enthusiasts can create.

***Game-Maker* provides a set of development tools and a software engine to drive computer games, and it is compatible with ATs and VGA. It requires a mouse, hard disk, 512K memory and 286 CPU or better, and it optionally supports a joystick.**

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Up to four *Game-Makers*, one for each member of the team; $516 list price.

Best Graphics (Animated):
MI Tank Platoon, from Chips and Bits.

Best Graphics (Static):
A collector's special of eight 1980s games from KD Software.

Every entry received gets a copy of *Barracuda: Mission One* by Gamelynk, a *Game-Maker*-based game.

CONTEST RULES

1. Up to two games can be submitted by any one person individually or as a member of a team. Games must be received at the address below, postmarked no later than 12 p.m., February 28 1993. Submit games on 3 1/2" or 5 1/4" floppy diskettes. Games can be of any size, but won't be returned by VG&CE. • 2. Original art and graphics are not necessary, but will receive extra orig nality points. • 3. Games will be judged by VG&CE editorial staff; all decisions are final. • 4. Judges will assign up to 100 points per game, in the following categories: Game Concept an Design—15 • Graphic Design—20 • Animation—15 • Story line/Theme—15 • Playability—20 • Originality—15 • **Total—100** 5. A game may win in a maximum of two categories. • 6. Entrants mus state if the game was an individual or a team development effort to be eligible for the individual or team prizes. 7. All games must be designed with and run under the *Game-Maker* Softwar License (i.e., you can not use bootlegged copies of *Game-Maker*). • 8. This contest is not open to employees of L.F.P. Inc. or Recreational Software Designs or their families. • 9. Entrants retai full ownership rights to their games. Additional Prizes to Be Supplied by American Software and Recreational Software Designs Send all entries to:

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PINBALL PLETHORA

A LOLLAPALOOZA

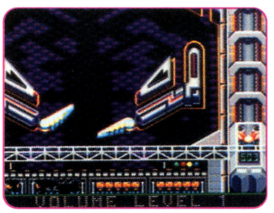
As video games numb our senses with flashier sights and ever more realistic sounds, they remain inadequate when it comes to reproducing the hyperkinesis of pinball. Bumpers, rollovers and targets on the TV screen don't react the same way as real ones do when struck by a steel ball. It's mechanical versus electronic entertainment, and the former wins out with the laws of physics on its side. But if you don't mind forgoing Newtonian science (and even tweaking its nose), the following titles do justice to this American original. Still, pinball wizards know that nothing beats the real thing.

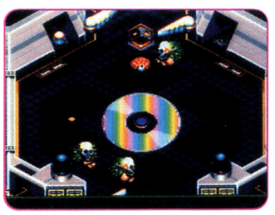
Alien Crush (all TurboGrafx systems). The one that started it all, showing video pinball needn't stick to the "reality" of the traditional game—it can look even better. *Alien Crush* is blatantly inspired by the work of surrealist H.R. Giger, the artist most paid homage to (read: ripped off from) in science fiction and horror. *Alien Crush* debuted as one of the best reasons for buying the then-new and technologically advanced TurboGrafx-16. How times have changed—yet, one thing hasn't: This pinball masterpiece *remains* the best reason for owning a TG-16 or Turbo Duo system. It's also one of the few TG titles that plays *better* on the TurboExpress.

NEC's eerie *Alien Crush* for TG-16 and Turbo Duo, the first in the *Crush* series.

With a lower price now (a mere 20 bucks), *Alien Crush* is a classic that's very affordable. (NEC)

Crüe Ball (Genesis). Video pinball where the ball moves and reacts like a real one! It's no wonder, considering that *Crüe Ball* was created by a pinball designer, and its music was written by a composer who also scores for the machines. Originally to be titled *Twisted Flipper*, this three-screen-high video pin packs a heavy metal attitude (including the music of Motley Crüe) with the action. Pinballers must hit targets so they can crank up the volume knob at the board's top to annoy slumbering neighbors. Killer clowns, maggots, crawling brains and other unsavory visions from heavy metal album-art hell scamper and squirm to *shut off that awful noise!* After the volume is juiced up nine times throughout play, the ball needs to be fired thrice into the orifice of Mr. Gore, and then the entire board explodes in all its rock 'n' roll glory. *Whatta concert!* (Electronic Arts)





Right: *Crüe Ball* by EA for Genesis.
Below: *High Speed* by Tradewest for NES.

Devil's Crush for the TurboGrafx-16/Turbo Duo systems.

Devil's Crush (all TurboGrafx systems). Skulls, skeletons, winged demons, horned devils and other hellish creatures animate *Devil's Crush*'s nightmarishly Gothic, stone-and-mortar design. Looking at this pinball table in action is like staring into a bucket of squirming earthworms. If this sounds tame, the demonic laughs and chanting of hooded monks circling pentagrams ought to freeze the spine. Kinda, sorta, possibly, *maybe* offensive to the religiously sensitive. Fact: The Genesis version was rechristened the innocuous *Dragon's Fury* and packaged with Dark Ages-like box art. But it's essentially the same game, meaning "dragon" is a relative term here. (*Devil's Crush* by NEC Technologies Inc.; *Dragon's Fury* for the Genesis by Tengen)

High Speed (NES). Meticulously detailed, this is a translation of the real machine by numero uno pinball crafts company Williams. It's unique, too, for the angled, vanishing-point perspective that the

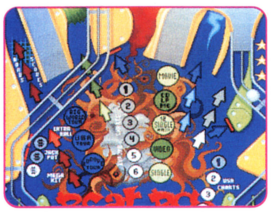
OF FLIPPER FUN

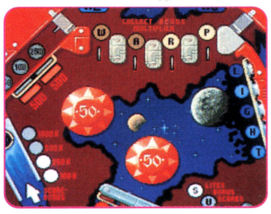
BY HOWARD WEN

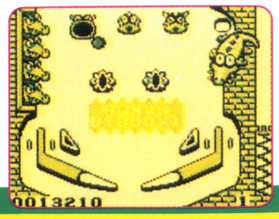
table is shown in, giving it an even more realistic pinball look and feel. Video-game improbability complements the faux realism. Water puddles slow the ball's roll, while acid eats it entirely. Rust corrodes the flippers, and bombs reduce them to pathetic stubs. A tumbleweed will catch the ball and sink it unless the machine is shaken to release it, but do it too much and things go "tilt." "Complements"? Make that "frustrates," instead. Thankfully, one of the bonus screens resurrects that '70s sensation, pachinko. For second helpings of the similar, check out Nintendo's *Pin Bot*, also based on a Williams machine. (Tradewest)

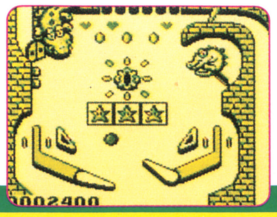
Pinball Dreams (Amiga/PC format). This one recreates the look of pinball machines right down to the steel shine of the ball runners. Bumpers, targets and gates appear virtually identical to the real things. Objects are precisely rendered with shading that makes the ramps look like actual inclines that go up a level. The play-on light is especially realistic for the score numbers, letters and direction arrows on the board that "light up," when, otherwise, they remain dim. Artwork for the four tables in *Pinball Dreams* also mimics the coin-op's gaudy surrealism and familiar themes. They include Wild West, science fiction, psychedelic rock scenarios and a horror setting that's a faithful rip-off of the *Terminator 2* pinball machine, though without Arnie. (21st Century Entertainment)

21st Century's *Pinball Dreams* (Amiga screens shown).









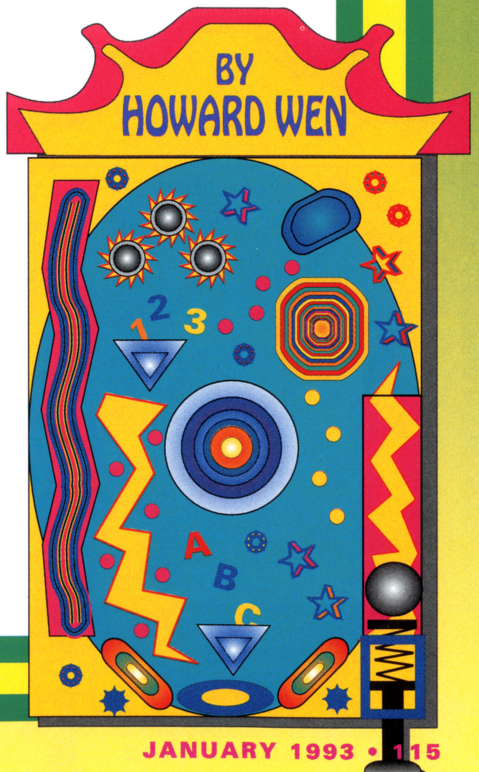
Two peeks at Atari's *Pinball Jam* for the Lynx.

Pinball Jam (Lynx). On average, every game system has two pinball titles worthy of insertion into the cartridge slot. *Pinball Jam* isn't one pinball game, it's *two*—and both are based on real quarter-suckers. Sometimes Lynx owners have the life. Who wouldn't want to cradle the Atari portable as the sultry voice of Elvira, Mistress of the Dark emanates from it, commenting on your ball-handling...*ahem*... skills on the *Elvira and the Party Monsters* machine? For the nitty-gritty, tough side of pinball, *Police Force* barks out the voices of radio dispatchers and donut-psyched cops out to bust up violators. *Muy bueno, el Atario!* (Atari)

Revenge of the 'Gator (Game Boy). Giddy, grinning 'gators gallop for the gamer in the greeting of this game pak for the Game Boy. *Revenge of the 'Gator* maxes out the Nintendo handheld by loading in the standard features found in pinball titles for the regular TV-hookup units. That's good. The primary play table consists of two parts, and there are six additional, bonus screens. Bad, otherwise, because the Game Boy barely handles it all. The ball disappears when it whizzes at high speeds, courtesy of the eye-straining green screen. Two pinballers may join separate Game Boys into holy-data matrimony and play a game where both try to out-flip the other. Mississippi River banjo music plays as the soundtrack in this cartoonish pinball-on-the-go. (HAL America)

HAL America's *Revenge of the 'Gator* for Game Boy.

Take-A-Break Pinball! (PC format). While the spreadsheet crunches or the term program downloads that gigabyte-sized report from the head office, *Take-A-Break Pinball!* becomes the ideal corporate time waster next to the chain letter fax. Sierra cribs a traditional enterprise of pinball—gratuitous promotion of licensed properties—in this case, Sierra's own computer games. Self-plugathon ventures sound like creative sinkholes, but leave it to the



Far left: *Time Cruise* for TG-16/Turbo Duo. Near left: *Tristan* (Mac).

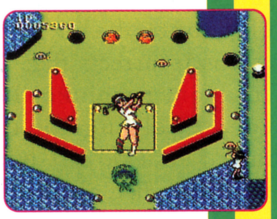
electric bohemians at Sierra to do it right. *Take-A-Break Pinball!* does its take on *The Adventures of Willy Beamish*, *Nova 9* and the *Space Quest*, *King's Quest* and *Leisure Suit Larry* franchises. The attention paid to realizing each title in pinball vernacular shows that the programmers not only cared, but were also aware they were milking the sacred Sierra cows. *Take-A-Break Pinball!* serves as another good excuse for using the icon toy *Windows*. Color Mac users can expect to take a break, too, later this year. (Sierra On-Line)

Time Cruise (all TurboGrafx systems). Three screens high and three *wide*, this pinball title features the largest table of all. Bonus levels—six total—challenge the player to contests like golfing. Bigger doesn't necessarily mean better, though, and *Time Cruise* lacks the animated detail of both *Crush* games (not to mention its boring brick layout design). But the play difficulty is less taxing on the beginner, and this latest TG-16/Turbo Duo title should be a sign of better—and bigger, of course—things to come. (See *Video-Game Reviews* in this issue for an in-depth look at *Time Cruise*.) (Turbo Technologies Inc.)

Tristan (PC/color Macintosh format). This game is a tribute to early pinball machines that pioneered today's versions, which are more reliant on electronics. That's nice, but *Tristan* might be too simplistic for some, with its understated layout and rather subdued sound effects. But it's a charming look back at the basics of the game, and the company behind it dedicates itself to producing only pinball titles for computerists. The manual for *Tristan* is more of a history of pinball than merely a book of game instructions. It includes an extensive "pinballography" of machines manufactured by major pinball makers, past and present (though it's notable that Atari isn't one of them—what about its gargantuan *Hercules*?). As further indication of this ball-and-flipper commitment, creations by Williams, Bally and Gottlieb have been licensed. Look for Bally's *Eight Ball Deluxe* on software sellers' shelves. (Amtex Software)

Dinoland (Genesis). It's a "crazy, zany game!" as the manual says. Cross the Flintstones with pinball and this is what you get. Cuteness swells to dangerous proportions as DINO-Bunz and company protect his girlfriend, Meeshell, from carnivores and pesky pterodactyls. Prehistoric landscapes function as the pinball table and ball pathways. Not much was reported on *Dinoland* when it was released in early '92, but pinball originality thrives here. To be inducted into the Cute Dinosaurs Hall of Fame, where *Bubble Bobble* and *Trog* are. (Renovation)

Renovation Products' *Dinoland* for the Genesis offers a "cute" motif.



Jaleco's multiformat *Pinball Quest* for the NES features a "quest" mode.

Pinball Quest (NES). Pinball is basically about hitting things with a steel ball. *Pinball Quest* gives the gamer a *purpose*, thus, expanding the possibilities. Taking place in a six-level castle, the rescue of Princess Bali is the goal. Target fodder are tombstones, ghosts, skeletons, witches and such. Items can be purchased with coins earned (instead of points) while playing. Things for sale include various ball stoppers and flippers that enhance the destructiveness of the ball. *Pinball Quest* also has three variations on traditional pinball, but it's the title's questing that sets it apart from others. For regular pinball flipping on the NES, look for *Rock 'n' Ball* (NTVIC) and *Rollerball* (HAL America). (Jaleco)

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CIRCLE #145 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Pondering the Public Domain:

A LOOK AT SOME OF THE BEST INEXPENSIVE COMPUTER GAMES

During these budget-conscious times, not everybody has the money to drop down $59 on a computer game—especially if it takes only a few hours to solve or is substandard in quality. What most people don't know is that there is another source where computer games can be found that you won't find in computer retail stores. So, where do you find these games? On electronic bulletin boards and at computer swap meets across the country. Gamers can find and download these gems (and also nongems) from on-line systems such as CompuServe, Delphi, GEnie and America Online.

by Mike Davila

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE WARREN

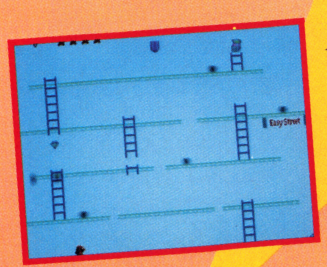
Public domain and shareware software has often been the way many software companies first start producing games. Trying to find a software company to distribute and sell your games when you don't have any reputation or noteworthy status can sometimes be impossible for a new game developer. And, in many cases, these shareware game developers and programmers will never go mainstream, not because they produce bad games, but simply because they're not interested in making game design a career.

One problem that afflicts shareware and public domain games is that there are tons of clone games around, as you will see on the following pages. There is a lack of genuinely original games in circulation. Most programmers opt to copy an old idea and ad some pizzazz to it, and, in some cases, they just create a poor, substandard copy, giving public domain and shareware games a bad reputation.

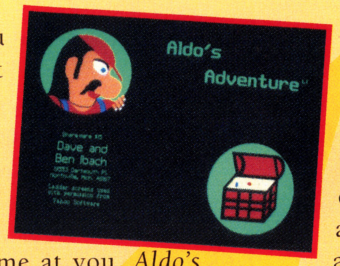
There is a general misconception about shareware and public domain software houses and the games that they create, which is that those games are not up to par with the big-name software companies' releases. In many cases that is very true, but also the reverse exists. Many shareware titles supersede the quality of professionally released games, such as Id Software's *Wolfenstein 3-D*, which blows the doors off many pro-released games and is probably one of the best computer games of the year.

On the following pages is a cross section of shareware and public domain games that I've compiled, complete with their authors' addresses and, in some cases, electronic bulletin board phone numbers where you can find them. Take a look and judge for yourself, and see if you can satisfy your computer-gaming needs with some high-powered, low-cost games.

IBM PC GAMES



Aldo's Adventure, by Yahoo Software, follows in the footsteps set by Mario in *Donkey Kong*. As Aldo, you must collect treasures by traversing and climbing up ladders while jumping over barrels that come at you. *Aldo's Adventure* requires a minimum of an EGA graphics card in order to run, and there is a $15 registration fee for use of the game.



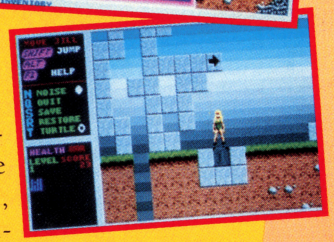
Galactix, by Cygnus Software, is an intense, arcade-style shooter. This game is more professionally done than some of the games that I've seen brought over from Europe for the PC. *Galactix* has an incredible intro that tells the story behind the game, which is, in the year 2019 an alien race called the Xidus invades earth, and you must save the planet from alien domination.

In order to play *Galactix* you need a 286 PC or better, with 570 K of RAM and 2.5 megabytes of free hard disk space. Most of that is taken up by the intro. Even if you are not into shooters, it's worth taking a look at because of its elaborate intro.

The game also supports Ad Lib and Sound Blaster sound cards and contains digitized speech. *Galactix* can be obtained by calling the Checker Board BBS at (508) 343-8848 and downloading. There is a $10 game registration fee, and for $15 Cygnus Software will send you the latest update.

The third and last in the popular 3-D EGA shareware series, *Hugo III: Jungle of Doom*, by Gray Design Associates, continues the adventures of Hugo and his girlfriend, Penelope, this time in South America. *Hugo III* definitely has a Sierra look and feel to it. Using the directional keys, you control Hugo as he goes from screen to screen, and you also use commands such as "look," "get" and "put" to interact. The registration fee for *Hugo III* is $20, plus $4 for shipping and handling. Registered game users will get a hint booklet and an auto playback file that gives you VCR-like features.

Jill of the Jungle, by Epic MegaGames, is the first of an exciting action trilogy. This game is a run, jump and shoot title, very similar to what you find on many video-game console carts. In fact, the programmers and designers at one point take a shot at the famous big "N" plumber by with a news flash on the screen saying Mario has retired because of the Jill phenomenon.

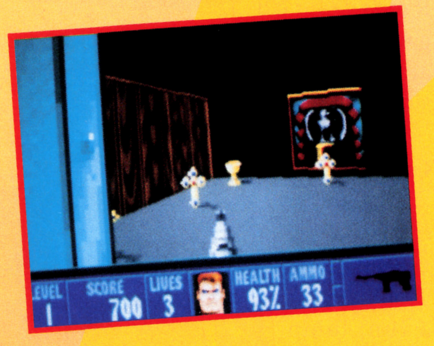


The game uses VGA 256-color graphics, which are accompanied by appropriate Sound Blaster sound effects and music. On-line help is also provided, explaining the game's control system and configuration for your machine. *Jill of the Jungle* can be obtained by calling Epic directly at (800) 972-7434.

Also from Epic MegaGames, *Kiloblaster Volume One: Death of a Starship* is an arcade shooter. As captain of the starship Kiloprise, you make it past 30 levels of intense alien attacks to get back

home in order to warn Earth. Like *Jill of the Jungle*, *Kiloblaster* is shareware for the registration fee of $30, plus $2 shipping and handling. Epic will send you all three volumes of *Kiloblaster*.

From the same software company that brought you *Wolfenstein 3-D*, Id



Software's *Keen Dreams* is action-arcade adventure. The story of eight-year-old Billy Blaze as Commander Keen continues, this time after he is sent to his room as punishment for not eating his vegetables. Soon afterward, Billy falls asleep and wakes up in the dream vegetable world of Tuberia, where candy canes are power-ups.

Keen Dreams is formatted very much the same as *Super Mario World* for the Super NES, with different areas on a map that have to be completed before moving on.

Keen Dreams is shareware, and the registration fee is $14.95. Softdisk Publishing is distributing *Keen Dreams* and is also offering the "Lost Collection" of Id Software, which is a collection of ten games, including a registered version of *Keen Dreams* for $69.95. Gamers can reach Softdisk Publishing at (800) 831-2694.

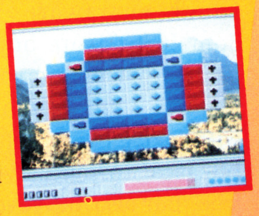
SimTrek V2.3, by Rockland Software Productions, is more of a working demo than an actual game. Once users officially register it for $12, they'll be sent a full working copy, complete with 50 missions. *SimTrek* simulates a tour of duty on a starfleet starship. The object of the game is to become one of starfleet's finest by completing as many missions as possible before your tour of duty is over.

MACINTOSH GAMES

A *Breakout*-style game containing excellent graphics and sound, *Diamonds*, by OPware, was created by a programmer in Switzerland. The object of the game is to first collect all colored bricks and then go after the diamond bricks, while you avoid the death bricks. Once all the bricks have been collected, you move on to the next level. If your Mac has System 6.0.7 or later the audio comes in multiple channels.

Diamonds is shareware and costs $20 to register. Registered users will receive version updates and a level editor that will let you modify, import and export levels of your own design.

Mac owners rejoice! *Pacman*, by M.T., is a clone of the original *Pac-Man* arcade favorite by Atari. The game's sound, graphics and



SHAREWARE GONE MAINSTREAM

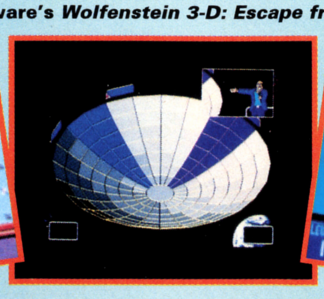
Id Software, through Apogee, has decided to sell all episodes after *Escape From Wolfenstein* as regular game software. Resisting offers from the major game software companies, Id and Apogee have decided to market the game themselves. The increasingly popular 3-D epic saga of Captain B.J. Blazkowicz can be ordered directly from Apogee by calling (800) 426-3123. *Wolfenstein 3-D* showed both gamers and software companies that you don't need a ton of hardware or a million-dollar software marketing department to be the best PC game around.

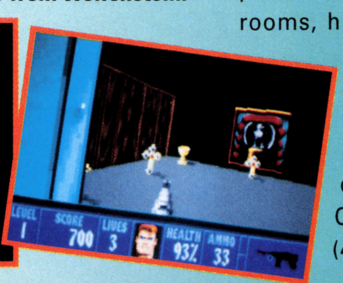
Casady & Greene will be marketing several previous shareware titles, including John Calhoun's *Glider* and *Pararena*.

For those not familiar with these two games, *Pararena* is a 16-color action game that's a cross between *Rollerball* and *American Gladiators*. Gamers can play each other via the Mac network or choose a single-player game.

Glider wins kudos for its originality and addicting play. The object of *Glider* is to control a floating paper airplane through 60 different rooms, hallways and staircases of an eerie mansion and fly out of it to safety. Both games can be ordered by calling Casady & Greene at (408) 484-9228.

Left and center: John Calhoun's *Glider* and *Pararena* respectively. Right: Id Software's *Wolfenstein 3-D: Escape from Wolfenstein.*

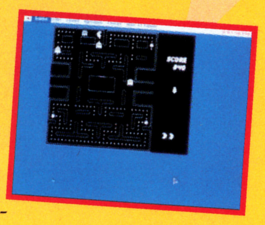




control mechanism are almost identical to the original arcade version.

Pacman is public domain, and there is no registration fee for the game, but there is also no documentation associated with the game and, unfortunately, no address where you can acquire the game directly. I downloaded this one from Delphi (see sidebar for details).

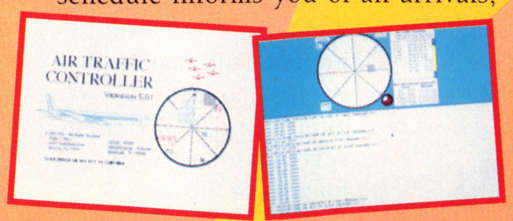
Mac-Man Classic V2.0, by John Butler, is a well-done black-and-white version of *Pac-Man*. What sets this game apart from its *Pac* counterparts are the myriad controls and settings available to the gamer, including level, speed and key selects. On-line help is available, so you don't have to exit the program to view the instructions. *Mac-Man* is shareware, and the cost to register it is $8.



Created by a software company that has decided to go retail, *Glypha II*, by Soft Dorothy Software, is a superbly done *Joust* imitation with an Egyptian theme. Instead of jousting ostriches, you go up against different types of sphinxes throughout its 99 levels. Also, amazingly, *Glypha II* is only in 16 colors, so you'll have to switch your monitor in the control panel.

The original version of *Glypha* was shareware, but the new version is now freely distributable without any registration fee.

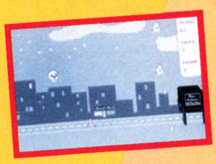
Air Traffic Controller V5.01, by Walter J. Biess, puts you in charge of all air traffic in the sector you've been assigned to. A predetermined flight schedule informs you of all arrivals, departures and overflights. As a flight controller, your job is to guide all aircraft to safety.



Anyone familiar with previous versions of *ATC* will see some major improvements in this update. Users can customize the number and types of aircraft they use, sector terrain and other features, such as icon color and simulation duration.

ATC V5.01 is freeware, and the author has stipulated that it may be distributed, as long as no charge is incurred for the program.

Slime Invaders, by Ingemar Ragnemalm, is a cute, black-and-white takeoff on...yes, you guessed it, *Space Invaders*—or, if you prefer, a game of stupid, brutal violence, as the author calls it.



Once upon a time, as the game's story line goes, the city of Arcadopolis was attacked by the evil slime people, who intended to enslave the poor citizens of the city. You are in charge of the SDI (Slime Defense Initiative) and must rid the city of its evil slime.

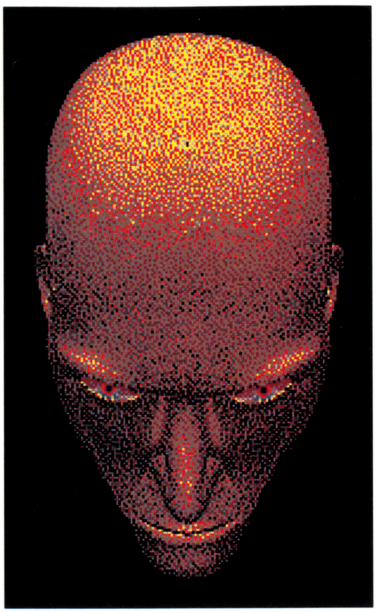
Slime Invaders is freeware, but, if you send the author $10, you'll receive a disk with the latest update of the game along with several of his other creations (*Bikaka*, *Hexmines*, *Skiing* and *MacSokoban*).

Jewelbox, by Micro Imagineering, is a puzzle game similar to *Columns* and *Tetris* that features 256 colors, custom audio and soundtracks and multiple levels. The object of the game is to match up three or more jewels of the same color and type in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal row.

Jewelbox requires that you have any Mac II system, with 256-color capability, System 6.0.5 or later and at least two megabytes of RAM. *Jewelbox* is shareware, and the registration fee is $10, but, if you send $25, you'll receive updates on disk as soon as they are made available.

In *Sparkz*, by IDMED Inc., the player must fill a large area of a play rectangle (80%) while avoiding a spiraling set of lines. As the gamer progresses from level to level, the percentage of the rec-

Puzzled?



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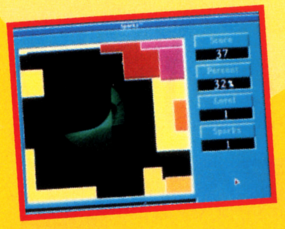

tangle that needs to be filled increases each time.

Sparkz is freeware, and there is no registration fee, though distribution on all high-capacity media (over two megabytes) is strictly forbidden. The reason being that *Sparkz* will be released as part of a CD-ROM collection by the Shareware Authors Inc.

Originally started in 1985, *Trek V1.4.2*, by Rob Koch, caters to Mac *Star Trek* aficionados. The author calls it a classic "hunt and kill" Klingons game. Players must search the 64 quadrants of space

and remove the rising number of Klingons attacking Federation territory space.

Trek is shareware with a registration fee of $12, which covers new-version notices and extra-feature modules. As with *Sparkz*, *Trek*'s distribution on high-capacity media is forbidden.

Columns II, by Chris Christensen, is another *Tetris*-type game with a different twist. Instead of

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If you own a modem, you might want to try out some of the several on-line services for sources of public domain, freeware and shareware games. These services may be reached at the following numbers:

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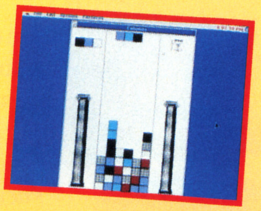
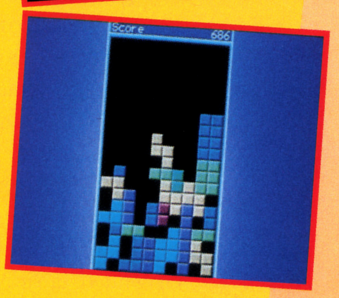


matching up colored blocks, patterned tiles are used. The game allows the user to select up to 12 different patterns. What really sets this game apart from others in this genre is that it has a tournament mode that allows gamers to play the same exact



game on different machines at different times, competing for a better score. *Columns II* is shareware, and the registration cost is $12.

Remember, the philosophy behind shareware games is "try before you buy." Most of the people behind these games don't have the funds to promote and market their games, so they let the games speak for themselves and rely on the honesty of the user.

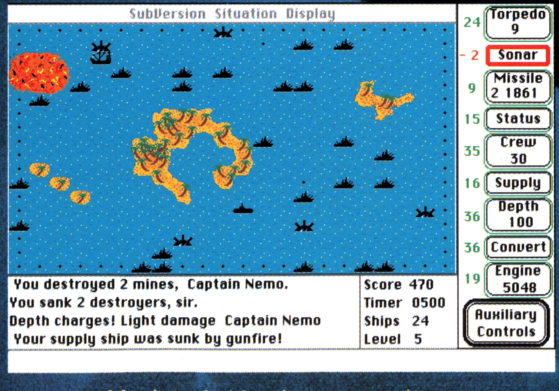
SubVersion™ 1.0

War has been declared! As Commander of the Attack Submarine "Nautilus", your mission is to engage any and all enemy vessels within the region and obliterate them. Warning! They are armed with high-tech equipment and they are out to sink you!

Chase down and sink destroyers with either a speedy torpedo or a nuclear-tipped missile. Blow enemy submarines out of the water as they close in on you. Dodge the cumbersome but sensitive mines -- snag a cable and it's off to a watery grave. Send out your frogmen for some demolition work.

Watch your resources! With only two supply ships, you'll have to be careful. Use them unwisely and you may find yourself sinking helplessly towards an implosive end.

SubVersion™ is a challenging balance of strategy and tactics. With 10 levels and over 300,000 combinations of game play, SubVersion is sure to provide you with hours of destroyer-bashing fun.



Macintosh 16 color screen shown

Available for Macintosh and compatible machines. Coming soon for IBM PCs and other computer systems.

See your local retailer or call:

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Game Created by: Captain Byte's Bit Shop
Box Artwork by: Josh Stigers
Computer Artwork by: Steve Laveirge

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COMPUTER STRATEGIES

creating a UTOPIA

KONAMI

Konami's *Utopia* is one of the most engrossing strategy games to come along since *Populous*. And, although *Utopia* may look much like a cross between *Populous* and *SimCity*, it's really a game unto itself, requiring very different strategies. In this article, we'll examine how to build a strong colony quickly.

Your first goal should be to make your colony as self-sufficient as possible. It's a waste of badly needed funds to buy supplies on the intergalactic market; you're better off in the end to make your own. So, when you start a new colony, immediately build a good selection of different buildings, in order to be sure that you have not only enough of the basics to supply your colony, but also enough to sell. Trading surplus supplies is a good way to make extra bucks. And, as you build, remember to leave space between buildings, so tanks can maneuver through your colony easily.

Remember, too, that some buildings need to recruit special personnel, without which they cannot operate. These buildings include hospitals, laboratories, workshops, chemical plants, mines, ship and tank construction yards and security HQs. Whenever you add one or more of these types of buildings, make sure you also request personnel. This is easy to forget when you're intent on building.

Once your colony has a well-balanced selection of industries, it's time to think about defense. Specifically, you should surround your fledgling colony with laser turrets and missile fields. Missiles should not be scattered, but rather grouped into fields so you can quickly launch many at once. When you get attacked (and you will), you'll have no time for finding individual emplacements. Build several missile fields around the outskirts of your colony, so you have plenty of defense and can find them quickly.

And speaking of defense, the ship construction yard is unique in that you must not only supply the required personnel, but also assign the work. Keep your workers busy; building an effective attack and defense force is essential to your colony's survival. As soon as a ship is completed, get your people working on another. Also, for both ship and tank construction yards, make sure there's always room for the next unit produced. If the construction crews have no place to put a new unit, they quit working.

You can trade only once a month; don't let an opportunity go by. Keep an eye on the demands of other colonies in the galaxy by first clicking on the "$" button and then using the hand button to access the manual-trading screen. Although the computer can trade for you, it's more effective to handle this important activity yourself.

The "$" icon also provides access to the current research grants. Check these amounts often. Without money, research drops to a crawl. You can't afford to be without the great discoveries your scientists can develop when they're properly funded.

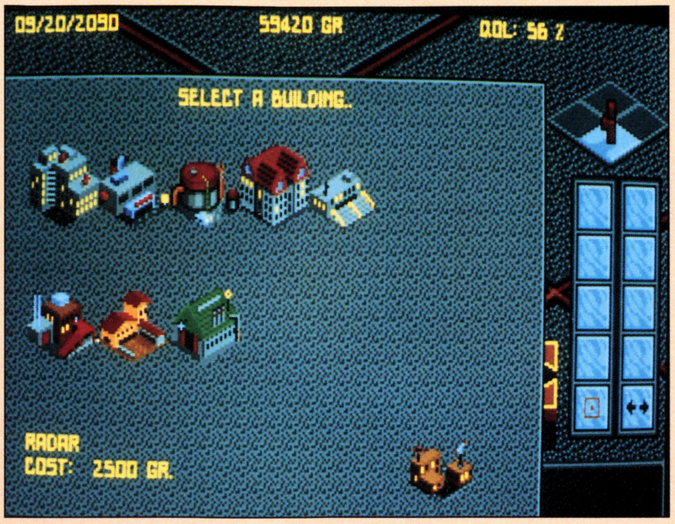
When your core colony is set up, start checking around for ore and fuel. These important commodities are critical to the growth of your colony. Without ore, you can't build attack units like tanks and aircraft. And without fuel, your planes cannot get off the ground. Use the map screen to locate ore and fuel. Then mark a new find with one of your markers, so you know exactly where to build when you go back to the main world view.

If you expect to keep good control over your rapidly growing colony, you'll need to consult with your advisers often. Each of the six advisers provides important information about different aspects of the colony. Especially important are the Senior Psychiatrist, who reports on population statistics (keep up with growing housing demands!), and the Colony Administrator, who reports on the supplies being produced and used. You must always keep your production higher than your usage.

Remember that you can only build within 12 squares of a flux pod. This means that, when you're ready to expand into undeveloped territory, the first thing you should build is a flux pod. Continual expansion is important if you're to locate those aforementioned ore and fuel deposits.

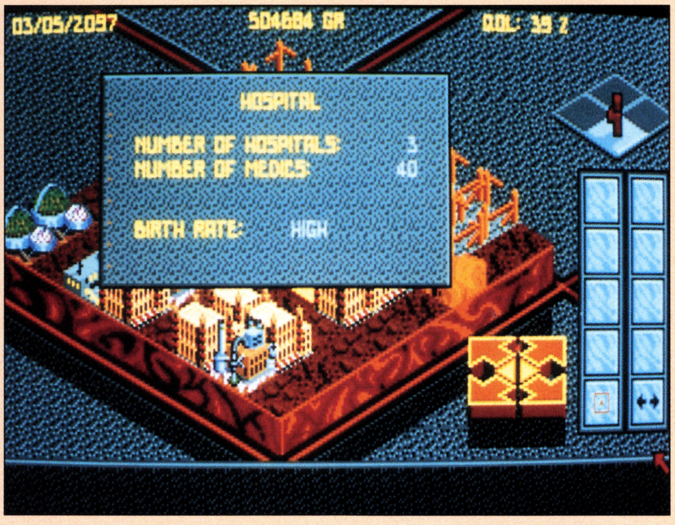
All these techniques and more are required to keep your colony growing and safe from enemy attacks. Of course, there are three gaming tips that are most important: practice, practice and practice. The more you play, the more you'll learn about handling a colony's affairs.

BY CLAYTON WALNUM



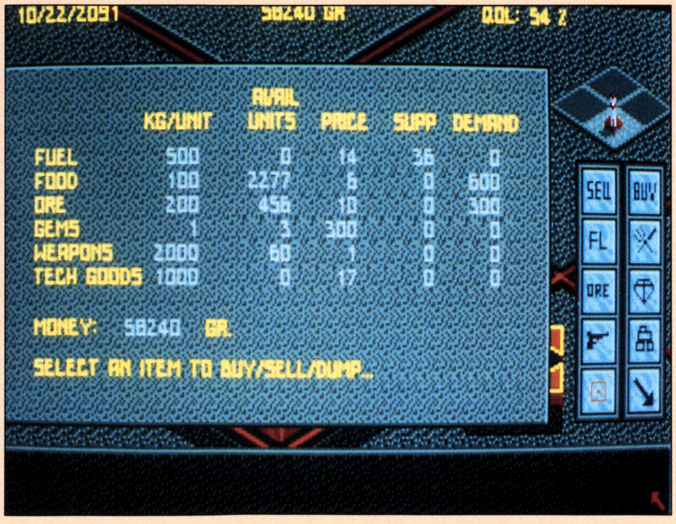
Get started by building a good mix of buildings, which helps your colony become self-sufficient quickly.

As you build, remember to leave space between buildings. Otherwise, you'll have a tough time getting tanks where you want them.



At the start of a game, you'll probably want to set the birthrate high. But, once your colony starts to grow, you should set it back to medium. If you don't, you may have a hard time keeping up with your colonists' growing demands.

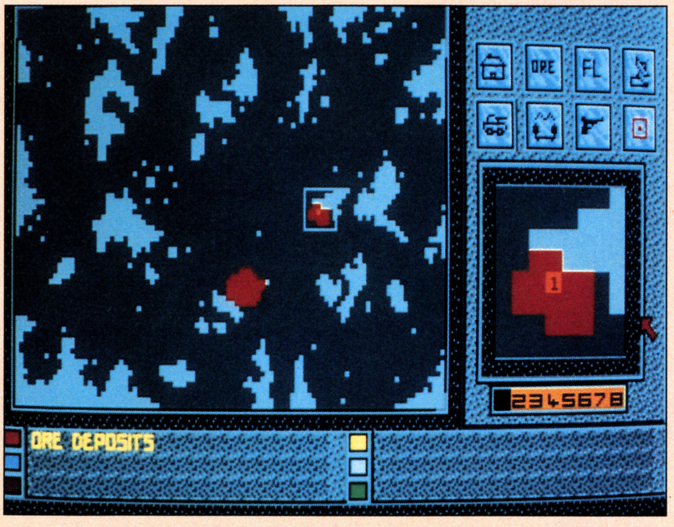
By building many missiles on one site, you can create missile fields, which allow you to launch many missiles quickly. This is vital when you're under attack.



Use the trading screen often in order to earn extra income.

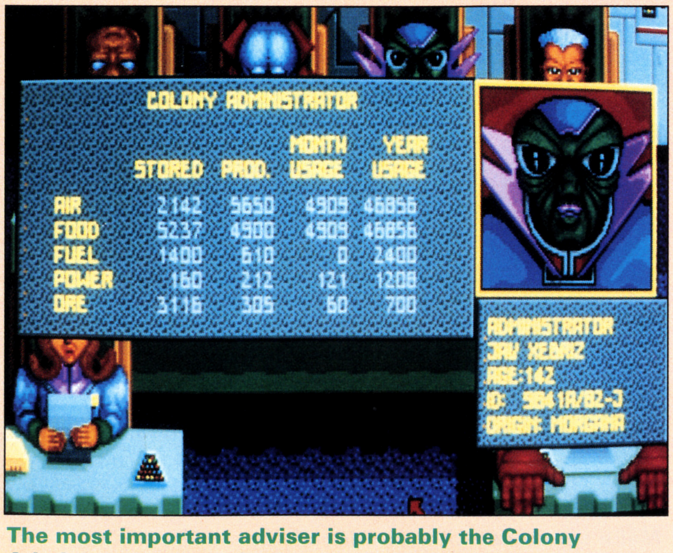
Make sure research is continually funded by adding money periodically to the grants. If you do, civilian scientists will develop helpful new devices, and...

...military scientists will develop new weaponry.



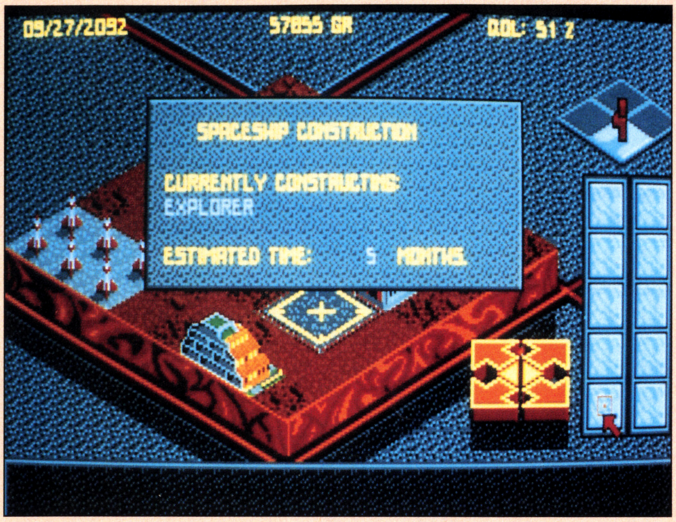
Use markers on the map screen to mark ore and fuel deposits. Then, when you go back to the main screen, you'll know exactly where to build mines and chemical plants.

Your advisers are important if you're to plan a successful colony. Refer to them often.

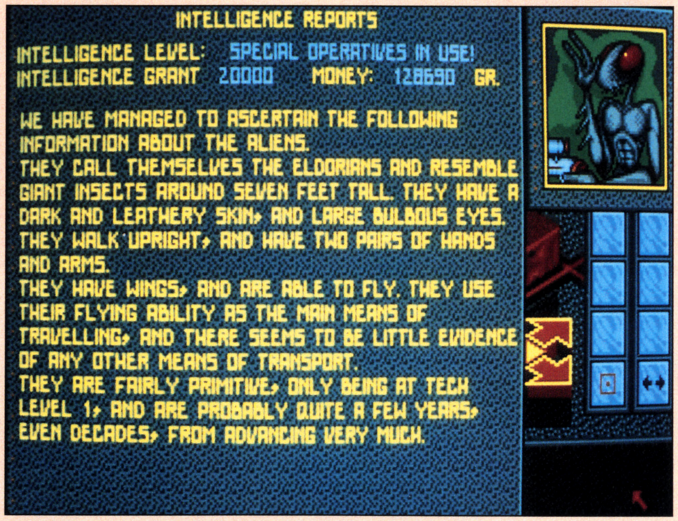


The most important adviser is probably the Colony Administrator. By referring to his screen, you can be sure that your production stays ahead of demand.

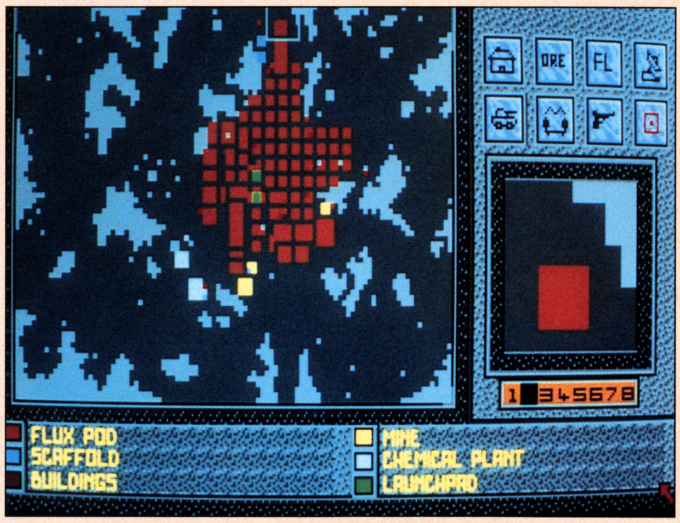
As you expand into unexplored territory, you first need to build new flux pods. Without them, you can't build other types of buildings.



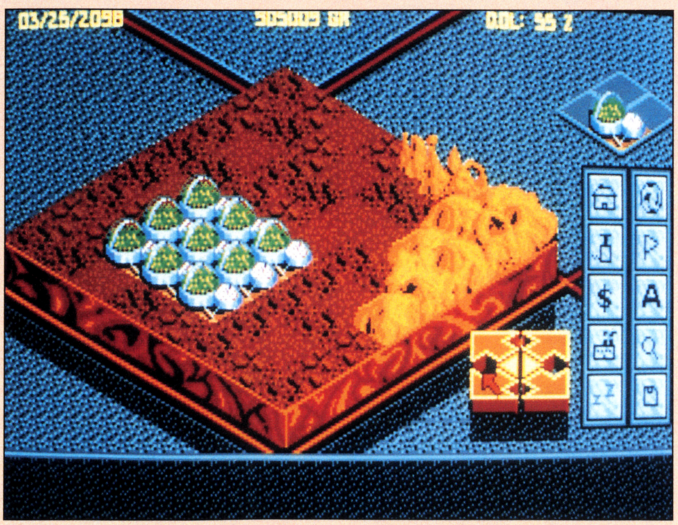
Your shipbuilding crews need to be assigned tasks every time they complete the previous one. Make sure you keep them busy, or your military will not be built up to peak strength.



Funding spies is a sure way to get important information about your enemies. Many times this information is critical, such as a warning about a pending attack.



Once your colony gets large, the map screen lets you more easily evaluate its needs.



Large colonies require greater resources upon which to draw. You'll have to start constructing blocks of buildings rather than just single buildings. You'll never keep up with the demand if you don't.

When you've built up your military, it's time to attack the alien enemies. Attacks weaken their city and slow their production. Just remember not to leave your own colony undefended.

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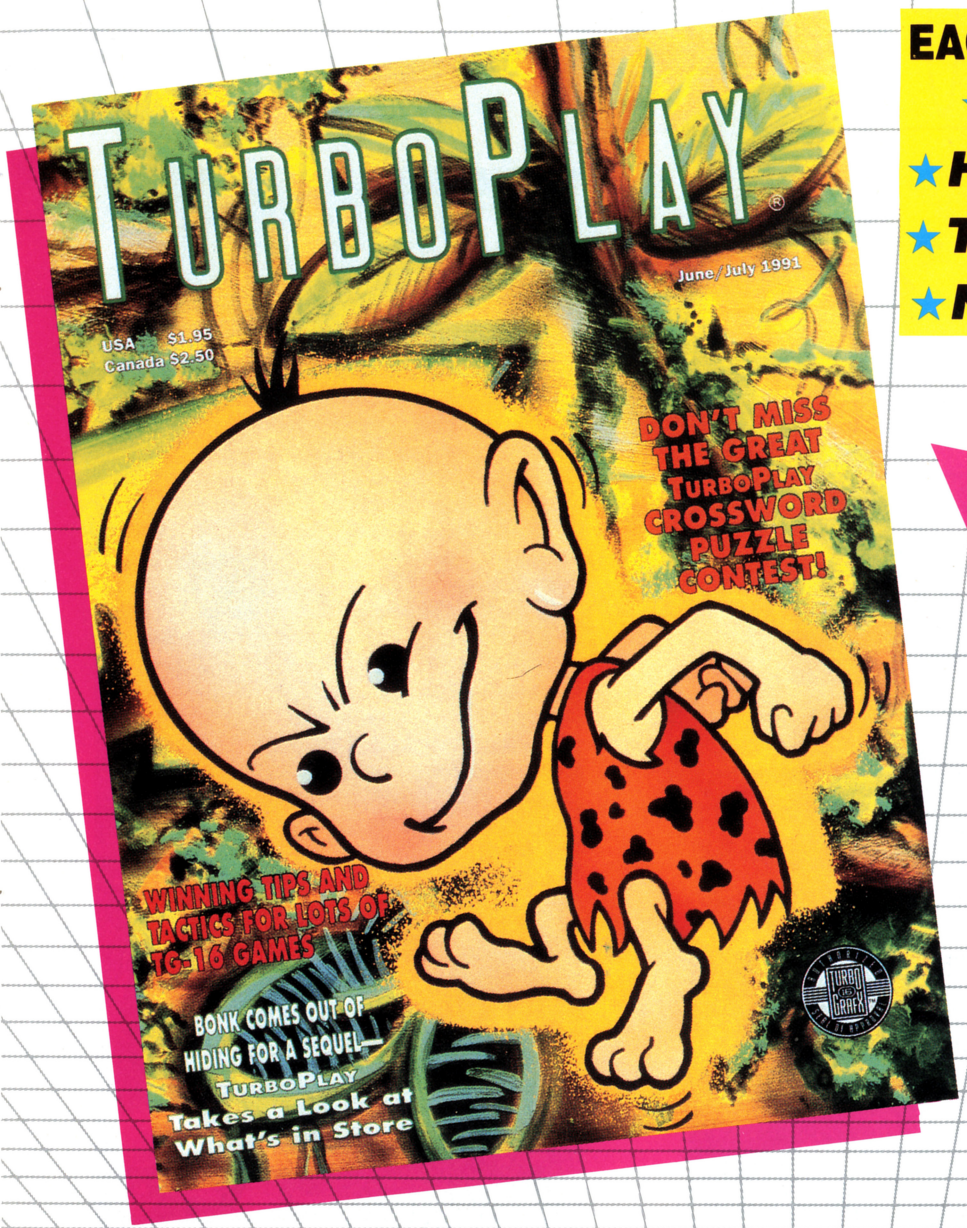

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COMPUTER GAME PREVIEWS

FIRST LOOK

Dominus

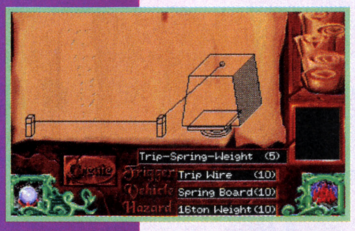
ASCII

Version Previewed: IBM PC

"God" games have been done to death. There's no point in playing a near-omnipotent overlord after watching city after city built and destroyed faster than anyone really cares.

But what if you could use magic to create your own biological abominations out of existing creatures, breed them and then direct them in tactical combat against other magical laboratory spawn?

This is the approach Visual Entertainment and Ascii's *Dominus* takes in its 80-plus-hour conquest of the world. Not only will players create the creatures used to protect their 75 territories, but they can build their own traps. And if that isn't grisly enough, wait until you see the interrogation chambers.



Day of the Tentacle: Maniac Mansion 2

LUCASARTS

Version Previewed: IBM PC

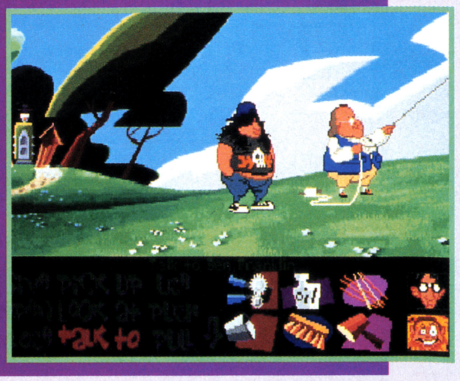
Maniac Mansion was noteworthy not only for its success, having spawned an NES game and a television show, but its offbeat sense of humor.

Well, for the last few years Tim Delacruz and Dave Grossman have been warping the humor, the game's characters and the very graphics to create *Day of the Tentacle: Maniac Mansion 2*.

Led by Bernard, the computer geek from the first game, the cast of *Mansion 2* fights to save the world from Dr. Fred's mutant, pollution-drinking tentacles.

Accompanying Bernard this time is Hoagie, a heavy metal roadie, and Laverne, an insane medical student, in adventures leading them 200 years into the future as well as 200 years into the past.

Mansion 2 will also use the SCUMM storytelling mode in conjunction with cartoon-like graphics and an iMUSE soundtrack.



Legends of Valour

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS INC.

Version Previewed: IBM PC

With titles like *Shadow of the Prophecy* and *The Summoning*, Strategic Simulations has shown itself to do more in its fantasy role-playing systems than simply adapt *Dungeons & Dragons*, and it continues this trend with *Legends of Valour*.

This single-character FRPG takes place in Mitteldorf, a town covering over 28 square miles. Players join up to nine guilds to develop their various skills and then go on quests to earn experience levels within the skills themselves. Upon reaching the fifth level in four skills, they gain the knowledge necessary to hunt down the demon secretly controlling the Mitteldorf throne.

Players will also have access to a special, smaller-range view screen, which should allow those with slower, older computers to play the game at a quick pace.

FEATURE REVIEW

COMPUTER GAME REVIEWS

Might and Magic: Clouds of Xeen

NEW WORLD COMPUTING INC.
Version: IBM PC ($69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

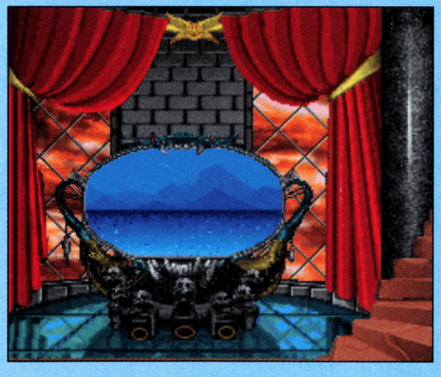
For the past several months, fantasy role-players have suffered a dearth of any significant RPG releases. Well, the time has arrived to polish your armor and sharpen your swords once again with the release of two major adventures for the role-playing fanatic—*Might and Magic: Clouds of Xeen* from New World Computing and *Crusaders of the Dark Savant* from Sir-Tech. This review focuses on the former, by Jon Van Caneghem.

Clouds of Xeen, which is based in an entirely new world, opens at Vertigo, an appropriately named village where more confusion exists than just in the minds of the local populace. As the story unfolds, the player and his companions have been summoned together by Crodo, King Burlock's adviser, through a series of dream messages. It seems that an individual claiming to be the king's lost brother, Roland, appeared after an absence of many years. Crodo, however, discovered that this Roland was actually Lord Xeen in disguise—a vile, undead creature. The result was Crodo's imprisonment, leaving the responsibility of destroying the evil overlord and freeing the realm from his grasp to the brave adventurer and his faithful band.

Those familiar with previous volumes in the *Might and Magic* saga, especially *Might and Magic III: Isles of Terra*, will already know what to expect in *Clouds of Xeen*. As in previous offerings, game play is open ended. Quests and challenges may be accepted or declined, with those accepted completed in any order. Thus, there is no frustration and backtracking because an earlier clue or item has been missed.

The easy to use, point-and-click interface employed is basically that of its immediate predecessor, with some additional refinements. An automatic quest and message keeper has been added to provide a list of current quests and important game information at a quick glance. Combined with the auto-mapping feature and the "cartography skill," there is little, if any, need for the player to keep "paper" records.

Xeen's game world is presented through a screen composed of a display window, view window, character portraits window, options icons and direction icons. The display window opens up a 3-D, first-person view of the world before the player and fills about 50% of the screen. Several "warning devices" are incorporated along its border to aid the player, including indicators for facing direction, levitation, danger, protection, secret passages and clairvoyance. The view window offers an overhead view of the party's immediate area (if the cartography skill or the Wizard Eye spell is used), though it only shows where the player has been. Small portraits depict the condition of the adventurers in one's party in the character portraits window (faces swell, for instance, when characters are poisoned). Most of the party's activities, including combat and spellcast-



ing, are controlled from the options icons, while party movement is handled with the direction icons. All icon-controlled features also have keyboard equivalents.

Combat, though giving the impression of being real-time, is, in fact, round-based. As such, there is plenty of time to decide what offensive or defensive action is most appropriate. Next to combat, a major portion of the game is devoted to object management. Items acquired, such as armor, weapons and magical artifacts, must be equipped or sold, while damaged items must be discarded or repaired. Spells must be gained and gems collected for certain spells to work. Accordingly, players who thrive on managing numerous details will simply love *Clouds of Xeen*, while those looking for a game involving low mental overhead should search elsewhere.

Graphics and audio have both been bolstered. Although not quite up to the visual and aural standards exhibited in Sir-Tech's newly released *Dark Savant* (which was in development for a much longer period of time), *Clouds of Xeen* is a very involving adventure with attractive, 256-color VGA graphics, good animation, plus excellent music and sound effects—all of which contribute to a compelling atmosphere.

As for problems, the only real difficulty experienced was in getting the sound drivers configured properly, which took about an hour of experimenting (for some reason, the supplied drivers do not like the ProAudio Spectrum card). Aside from this shortcoming, the included manual only describes six spells out of the hundreds provided in the game. A complete spell list should be provided. There should also be more available save positions than the modest ten provided.

Might and Magic: Clouds of Xeen has everything necessary to appeal to both novice and seasoned adventurers. This addition to the *Might and Magic* fold seems to be more cohesive than any of its predecessors, involving the player much more fully in the game world than earlier efforts. It is both a joy and an addiction to play, with more than an ample supply of role-playing adventure in store. It's apparent that New World Computing did not have its head in the clouds when it created *Xeen*.

—Chuck Miller

New World Computing
20301 Ventura Blvd., Suite 200
Woodland Hills, CA 91364
(818) 999-0606

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Mike said it all when he said that the high degree of detail sets *Might and Magic: Clouds of Xeen* apart from most other RPGs. Andy gave the nod to its unobtrusive sound effects and music.

Front Page Sports: Football

DYNAMIX

Version: IBM PC ($69.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC										
GRAPHICS										
PLAYABILITY										
OVERALL										

Do you think you have what it takes to be the general manager, coach and star quarterback of a professional football team, or even a league commissioner? Dynamix's ambitious new simulation, *Front Page Sports: Football*, allows you to be any or all of these.

The game's "front page" lets you choose between playing a single Exhibition game or the more diverse League play. Exhibition and League play both support three types of Play Calling and Action modes. Basic modes provide simplistic play choices and require almost no control input during the arcade sequences, while Standard and Advanced modes offer more detailed play selections.

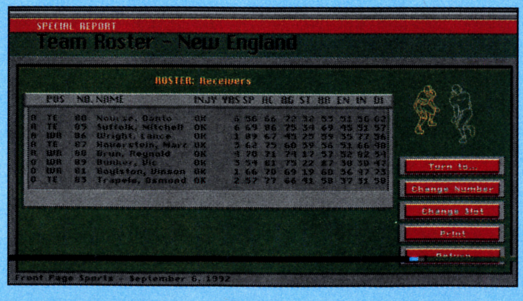
The League options are where *FPS: Football* really shines. Everything in the league can be customized, from the number of teams and length of the season to the name of the Championship Trophy. Modifications are easy with the point-and-click mouse interface. Since each team can be "owned" by a human player, League mode can be used to form 28-player interactive rotisserie leagues.

There are two kinds of leagues: Single Season and Career. Both types require team managers to deal with injuries, free agents, trades and roster moves during the season. Career leagues also include the college draft and training camp at the beginning of each year. The team members in Career leagues age and even retire over the course of several seasons.

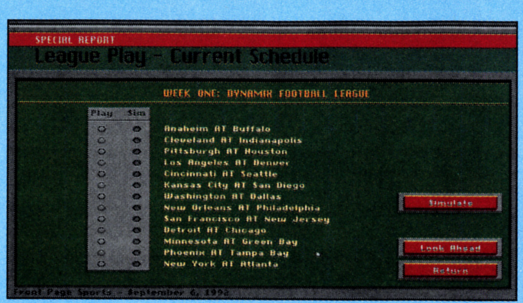
If League play sounds intimidating, take heart; novice owners can choose to let the computer manage everything from the college and supplemental drafts to free agent signings and roster moves. All you have to do is show up each Sunday and "just win, baby."

Other options include a playbook editor that allows you to create, modify and practice offensive and defensive plays, and an instant replay VCR interface utilizing adjustable camera angles.

The excellent graphics feature large rotoscoped players and extremely fluid animation. Referee windows pop up if a flag is thrown, and play-by-play text windows describe the action after each down. The playfield can be viewed from nine different camera angles, which the player can manually switch between or have the computer control.



The play selection screen takes some getting used to. Unlike the game's option screens, the play selection screen does not support the mouse. Using the joystick or keyboard to page through the playbook before the 45-second clock expires can be more daunting than converting on third down! It becomes easier once you've memorized which plays are on what page.



Owners of Sound Blaster-compatible boards will delight in the various digitized sound effects. The crunch of a hard tackle is perfect, along with the voices of the referee and players calling audibles. For those without a Sound Blaster, the game offers music during the setup screens, but is silent during the actual game play. Using the digitized sounds caused the game to noticeably slow down on my 33 MHz 386, but reducing the graphic detail of the field restored the smooth animation and scrolling.

FPS: Football is one of the most visually stunning and realistic simulations of the sport I have ever played. It is a rare example of a football game that will appeal to everyone, from the casual arcade player to the die-hard rotisserie league fanatic.

—Jeffrey Tschiltsch

Sierra On-Line
40033 Sierra Way
Oakhurst, CA 93644
(209) 683-4468

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE										
CB										
DM										
MD										

Can football be done any better on a PC? *Front Page Football* is "football made fun; it's about time" in Dave's words. Chris thought it was extremely well-done.

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CIRCLE #148 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

King's Quest VI: Heir Today, Gone Tomorrow

SIERRA ON-LINE

Version: IBM PC ($79.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC									9	10
GRAPHICS									9	10
PLAYABILITY								8	9	10
OVERALL									9	10

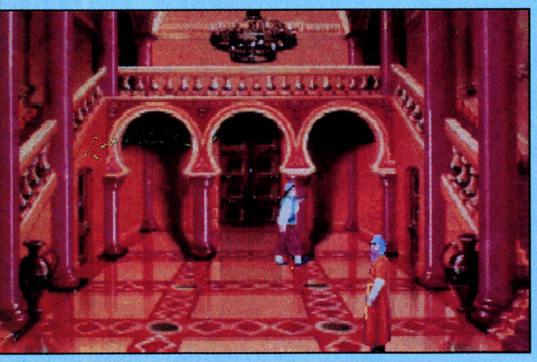
With the arrival of Roberta Williams' latest entry in the *King's Quest* series from Sierra, many may wonder, "Can anything creative still be done with the series?" Others, meanwhile, will wait with bated breath for the next installment in the saga of the royal family of Daventry.

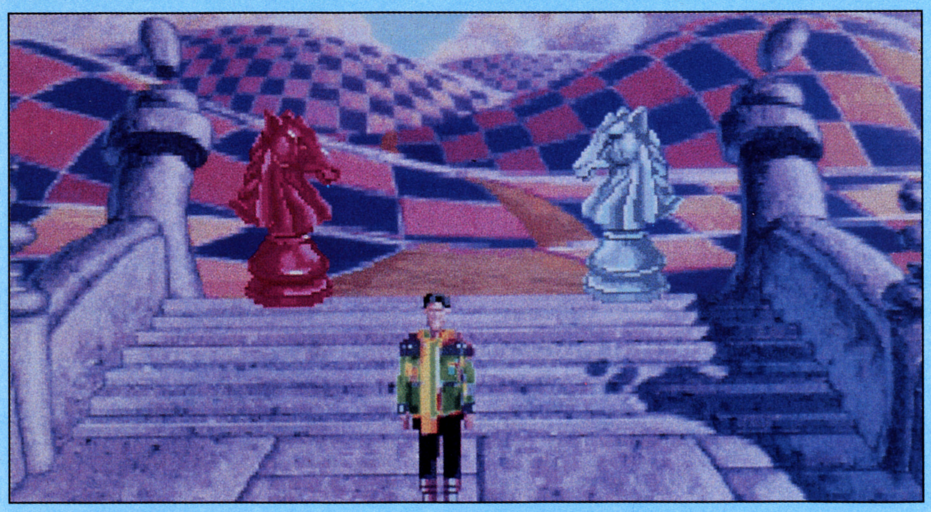
The plot line in this installment parallels, in many ways, the first foray into Daventry back in 1985. *King's Quest VI* brings us, yet again, another call from a mirror to save a beautiful damsel in distress. This time, King Graham's son, Alexander, must journey to the land of the Green Isles to rescue a maiden named Cassima, whom he met only briefly at the end of *King's Quest V*.

The Green Isles, five islands with origins in such legends as *Through the Looking Glass, Beauty and the Beast, Arabian Nights, Minotaur, Land of the Dead* and Druidic mythology, provide us with a new and different setting for the continuation of the *King's Quest* story. The finale takes place in the princess' castle, complete with guard dogs, secret passages and a dungeon.

Roberta Williams fulfills her goal of being, first and foremost, a storyteller in establishing an interesting plot and a diverse cast of believable characters. After losing his crew and transportation in a shipwreck, Alexander must unravel the mysteries of these lands in conflict and assemble the artifacts necessary to save the recently orphaned princess from the murderous Vizier. The evil Vizier is not only ruthless and deserving of death, but is also the most dangerous character in the game.

In *King's Quest VI*, although the hero always gets the girl and captures the wizard, optional subplots lead to a half-dozen possible endings, each with small differences. The game virtually eliminates dead ends—other than the hero's death—by allowing Alexander to go back and pick up an essential item later, leaving the game player with the flexibility to restore games in different locations. The 116-point "easy path" game is so different from the 231-point "all optional tasks completed" game that many game players will want to play both versions to see the variety of sections.





Roberta Williams and Jane Jensen succeed in answering the concerns of the old parser fans, who felt the puzzles in the icon-directed games were too easy. Optional puzzles are more difficult, while those required to complete the game are still easy, making the game playable for beginning adventurers. There are word puzzles and object-oriented puzzles, making the game more than just a scavenger hunt. *King's Quest VI* also has the standard Sierra pop-up, icon-based menu across the top of the screen, with all the standard features, including virtually infinite save games.

The animation of over 2,000 individual actions, through the use of painted-over film of live actors and traditional pencil-and-paper animations, uses the colorful palette of 256-color VGA. The sound involves realistic and believable digitized voice in the introduction cartoon, and digitized sound effects and Midi musical score, which are impressive.

King's Quest VI is an admirable product, devoid of bugs, that sets the standard for all future graphic adventure games. The CD-ROM version with total voice-over, which is in production, will be worth the wait.

—Alfred C. Giovetti

Sierra On-Line Inc.
P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209) 683-4468

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE								8		
CB									9	
DM								8		
MD								8		

Mike was immediately impressed by the introductory animated sequences. Chris also liked the graphics and the clean interface, while Dave took the story line.

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CIRCLE #149 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

MicroLeague Baseball 4

MICROLEAGUE SPORTS

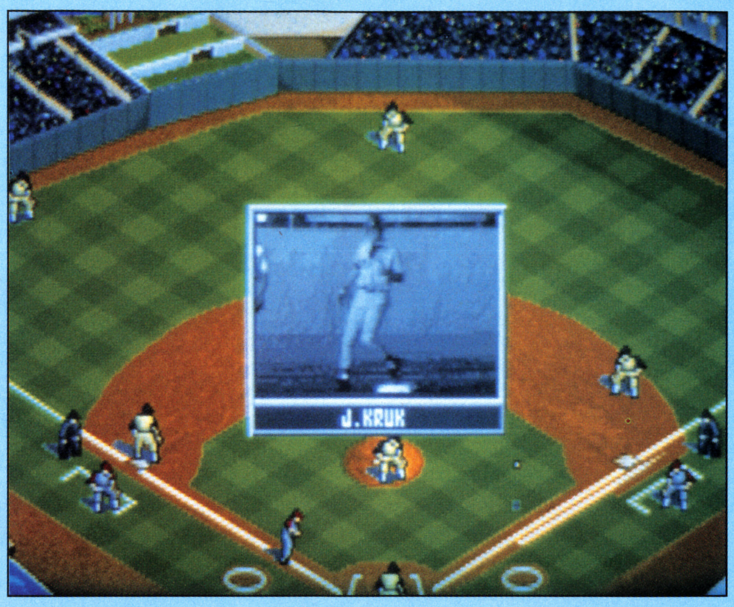
Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Once bitterly opposed to most action-oriented games, statistical baseball fans are warming up to graphics invading their favorite simulations. *MicroLeague Baseball 4* is now the latest switch-hitter to step up to bat. This perennial favorite plays into the hands of its loyal following, while deftly appealing to a potential crossover audience.

The latest version offers would-be major league managers greater control of their teams, from the top sluggers to rock bottom of the roster. In addition to menu-driven league creation and scheduling screens, the program now features a comprehensive manager profile editor. Here you create or modify managerial strategies used by the computer, based on an elaborate system of offensive and defensive actions and reactions.

The game also provides a more detailed breakdown of player ratings, including left-handed, right-handed and combined stats for batters and pitchers. Improved playbook options offer better control of pitching, field positioning and baserunning. Advanced probability calculations take into account such factors as seasonal streaks, slumps and stadium design.



Exhibition games allow one or two players to try out new playbooks and coaching strategies. League games can be played individually or in multiple sets, up to 162 days in one fell swoop. Extensive report functions send updated league standings, compiled stats, historical stats, play-by-play summaries and composite box scores to the screen, printer or disk.

Conceding there's more to baseball than number crunching, the game now features optional 256-color VGA graphics, digitized sound effects and ingenious use of stop-motion photography. However, die-hard statisticians need not fret: It's all window dressing, adding flavor to an admittedly dry simulation.

The graphic perspective features a press box view of the stadium, scrolling slightly to track baseline pop flies. After each manager enters a playbook code, the game moves to the animated outcome of the final pitch: hit, walk or strikeout. Simulated black-and-white video footage highlights the end of each play. Other options include the gruff calls of a digitized umpire, crowd cheers and a radar gun to measure pitching velocity. Finally, a handy pop-up stat notebook gives managers valuable information on player ratings and team lineups.

MicroLeague has created a smooth system of commands and menus, accessed via keyboard or mouse. One caveat: If graphics are turned on for a computer-managed game, the only way to halt play is to reboot the computer. The 48-page manual is also surprisingly terse and sparsely illustrated for a simulation boasting such depth.

Perhaps the game's best recommendation is its ability to interface with MicroLeague's extensive library of auxiliary disks, covering everything from World Series teams to all-star franchise histories. Last but not least, the game now offers a modem option to download stats directly from the USA Today Sports Center hotline. This increasingly popular feature, combined with the myriad supplement disks available, helps put the game at the top of its genre.

MicroLeague Baseball 4 commendably attempts to broaden the appeal of statistical sports simulations. Although it's doubtful such embellishments will sway fans to either side, it may convince some that there's more to baseball than a simple slugfest.

—Scott A. May

MicroLeague Sports Association
2201 Drummond Plaza
Newark, DE 19711
(302) 368-9990

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

All editors thought the cinematic clips made the game shine; Dave and Chris both were surprised that a stat game could be this entertaining.

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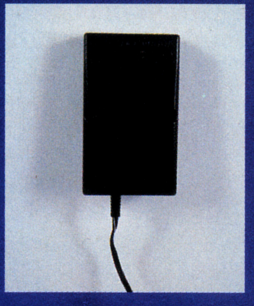

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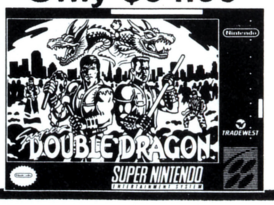


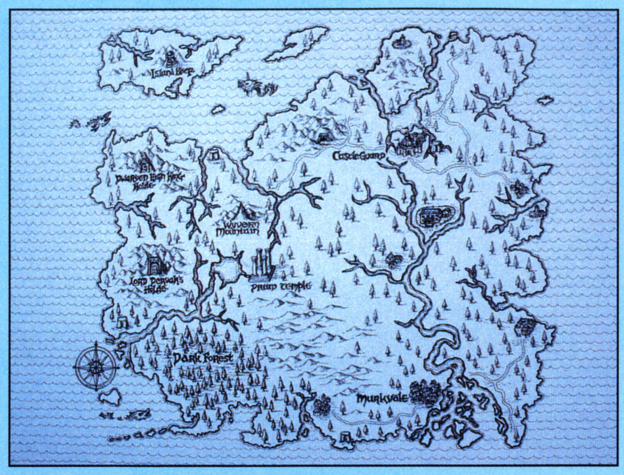
CIRCLE #150 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Lords of Time

HOLLYWARE

Version: Amiga ($49.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							7			
GRAPHICS							7			
PLAYABILITY								8		
OVERALL							7			

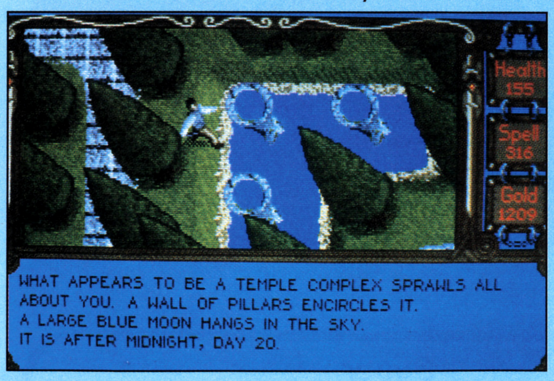


Lords of Time is a trip back into the past. Not the real world past, but the past of computer gaming. Basically, it's an improved version of *FaeryTale Adventure*, which is understandable, since Hollyware also published under the Microillusions label.

Fantasy role-playing games are not among my favorites, so I'm a little surprised that I've spent so much time with this one. I think it's because it plays less like a typical FRPG and more like an arcade game. It's mostly joystick controlled (a fact not mentioned anywhere on the box or in the documentation), with a few keyboard commands to call up menus.

What I dislike most about FRPGs is the dead-slow pace at which they're played with endless keystrokes, pointless battles and tedious scavenging for money and objects. While *Lords of Time* does have its share of these, the pace is fast enough that I don't mind. I would, however, like to outlaw random encounters with deadly spiders, evil druids and other arbitrary hindrances altogether. When encounters like this happen every few seconds, they add nothing to the play and quickly become annoying.

Lords of Time uses the same overhead perspective view pioneered by *FaeryTale Adventure* and suffers from the same limitations. It's fairly easy to lose your character behind trees and buildings, which is especially aggravating if it happens while you're besieged with enemies. The artwork is reasonably well done, if uninspired, with enough detail to make most (but not all) things easily recognizable without having to resort to the Examine command. The sound effects and music are, like the graphics, workmanlike but without inspiration.



Having done all of this carping about *Lords of Time*'s flaws, I find that there's still a lot to like about it. Above all is that the game's designers obviously also play this type of game. It's very easy (I might say too easy) to get killed off, but it's equally easy to take up again where you left off, and it only takes a few seconds. Games can be saved either to memory or disk, something I wish all games would allow. Games like this have to be worked at, and *Lords of Time* removes much of the mechanical frustration from the process. If there's ever been a FRPG with smoother play, I haven't seen it.

The plot of the game, as if it needed one, has you as a star pilot who has crashed on a typical fantasy-realm planet. You know nothing about it, and the only objective is to survive and find a way home. I like this approach much better than having to embark on some contrived heroic quest.

If you're as put off the awkward play of most FRPGs as I am, or if you've never tried a FRPG, take a look at *Lords of Time*. It isn't perfect, but it's a good way to get started, and it's also a step in the right direction for the genre.

—Tom Malcom

Hollyware
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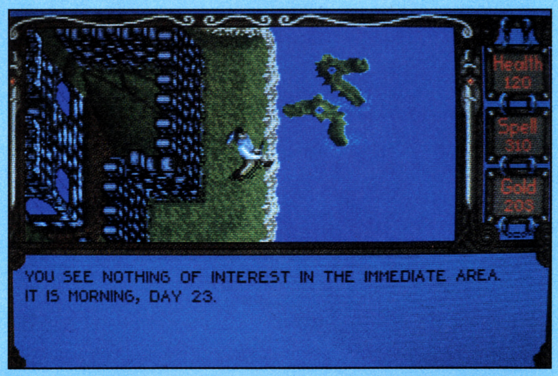

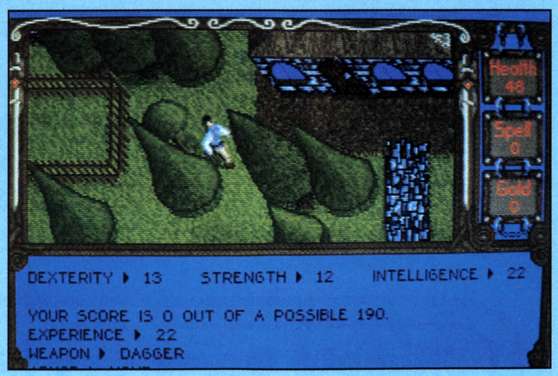

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE								8		
CB							7			
DM								8		
MD						6				

Dave thought *Lords of Time* was "a worthy successor, especially with a lack of combat." Chris felt this game was good, but the genre has been done to death.

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CIRCLE #151 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

The Ancient Art of War in the Skies

MICROPROSE

Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC									9	
GRAPHICS									9	
PLAYABILITY									9	
OVERALL									9	

When a game has a grand moniker like *The Ancient Art of War in the Skies*, one has the right to expect a great deal. Couple the title with the claim that this is "The Ultimate World War I Strategy and Action Game" (with "Ultimate" crossed out and replaced with "Fun"), and one has a right to expect even more. I'm delighted to report that *War in the Skies* delivers on most of its promises.

When you first load *War in the Skies*, you're greeted with an impressive intro, including spiffy graphics, snazzy music and digitized voices. After viewing the intro (which can be skipped with the press of a key), you move on to the main menu, from which you can choose several options, including "Go To War" and "Training."

The first stop for novices should be, of course, the training scenarios. Two sets of training missions are offered, one for gunners and one for bombers. In dogfight training, you control your plane in real-time battle against various adversaries, choosing to fight planes singly or three at a time. In these training scenarios, you must master banking, diving, climbing and all the other basic maneuvers required by fighter plane pilots.

In the bombing training missions, you pilot your bomber over target fields that may or may not include antiaircraft guns. Your task is to fly accurately over the targets, dropping your bombs as close to the bull's-eyes as you can. If a target run contains antiaircraft guns, you must either try to avoid them or bomb them into dust.

Once you get the hang of piloting your plane (which is done via a mouse, joystick or simple keyboard commands), you're ready to enter real battle. *War in the Skies* includes many scenarios from which to choose, from easy-to-master beginner confrontations to war scenes suitable for only master pilots (or the insane). Some scenarios are based on actual historical battles, while others are fictional.

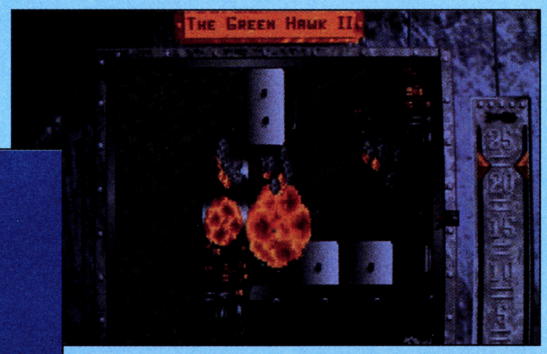
On the battle map, yours and the enemy's ground forces are clashing at the front lines, trying to push forward into the opponent's territory. On your airfields, planes lie in wait for their crews, ready to take to the skies upon your command. You assign the crew to a squad and then give the planes orders and a target, after which they ascend into the fray.

When a plane encounters an enemy aircraft or reaches a bombing target, you can choose to control the battle manually or let the computer handle it in the background. The bombing runs are especially entertaining to control manually, giving you a realistic view of the ground as your bombs blast the enemy's installation. If your plane wanders too close to the antiaircraft guns while under your control, though, you'll see flak denting the walls and cracking the windows of your aircraft, until, finally, the plane explodes into a full-screen, glowing-red skull. The death sequence is especially effective.

While MicroProse's *The Ancient Art of War in the Skies* may not actually be the ultimate action-war game (Who can say?), it can at least be argued that it's darn close. This is a gem that'll keep you patrolling the skies for months of hot wartime action. An undisputed winner.

—Clayton Walnum

MicroProse
180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley, MD 21303-2245
(410) 771-1151



EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE									9	
CB								8		
DM									9	
MD									9	

Dave liked the fact that you could bite right into it without hours in a training mode. Andy called it beautifully detailed; Chris liked its animation and features.

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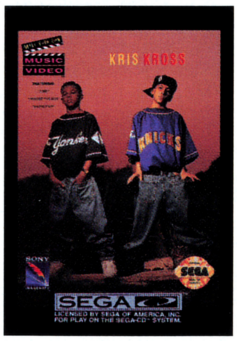

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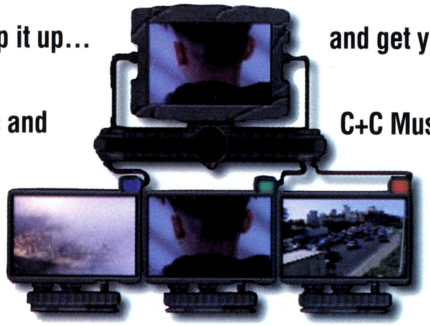
Just slip one of our revolutionary new music video game discs into your Sega CD. **Strap yourself in.** And get ready to endure a massive rush of intense CD sound, digitized live-action video and face-to-face interaction with real artists or a celebrity veejay. All you need to play these head bangin' games is awesome talent and lightning fast reflexes. You control it all as you **select**, **edit**, **slice** and **dice**. You're working with hundreds of clips from real music videos, movies and never-before-seen video footage – all in synch with dizzying special effects and the hottest, freshest music ever. Wrap it up...  and get your grade, straight from the veejay or artists themselves. Kris Kross and C+C Music Factory music video games from Sony Imagesoft.

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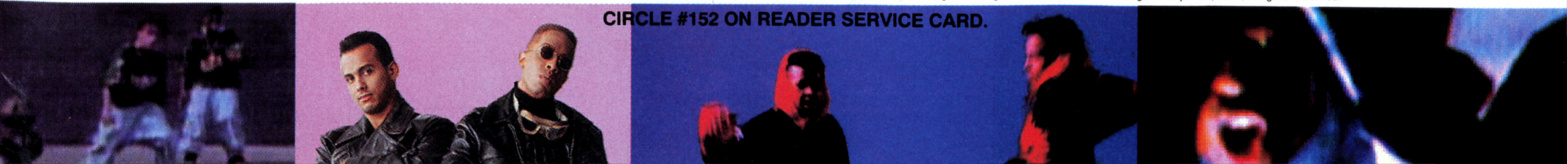


Liberty or Death

KOEI

Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In Koei's *Liberty or Death*, you're cast as the leader of the American Revolution of 1776. Your goal is a direct one: Through diplomacy, subterfuge, even outright warfare, you must free the nascent American nation from its British masters or keep the colonies properly controlled.

If you choose to side with the American cause, you can choose from three skilled generals, including George Washington. Next, you must begin solidifying your power base among the young colonies. Using your meager initial allotment of funds, you must also endeavor to raise an army by building barracks, buying weapons and training troops.

Combat takes place on an overhead grid map of the battle area, with a variety of unit types, ranging from musket-wielding infantry to cannon-toting warships.

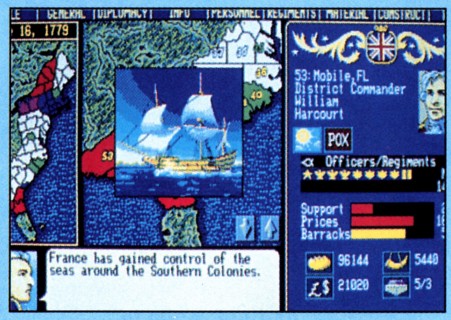
Not all of the obstacles American generals face will be carrying muskets and wearing red coats. In addition to tangling with the British military, you must guide the 13 American colonies through outbreaks of fever and smallpox, harsh extremes of weather and other natural disasters. Also, troops and districts can mutiny, throwing any carefully laid strategy to ruin.

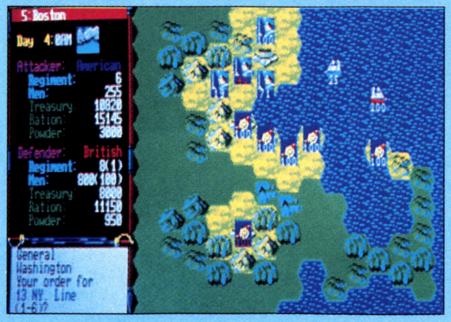
To make matters worse, the American commander in chief is, after all, an elected official. During a vote of confidence, politicians from each region can vote on whether to keep you or sack you from your post.

Winning as the American commander requires charting a safe course through up to four historical events. Chief among these is the signing of the Declaration of Independence by the American Congress, which can only be done after all of the British forces have been removed from the 13 colonies. Once achieved, you'll receive a bonus in the form of an increase in the morale of your followers, as well as a political boost for yourself, raising your influence.

The next event, the Anglo-Dutch War, involves the Declaration of War by the British on the Netherlands, who have continued to supply the colonies with goods against Britain's wishes. If you can survive the ensuing economic blockade and continue to successfully defeat attacking British forces, France and Spain may also come to your aid.

Once you've destroyed all of the British forces and/or forced the British government to give up the fight, victory is yours. Conversely, winning as the British involves thwarting America's plans for independence. Playing the British commander is comparable in both game length and difficulty.





In Koei's *Liberty*'s interface is mostly point-and-click, making heavy use of the mouse. Sound and graphics are both of good quality, although the dithered EGA-quality pictures used throughout most of the game appear dated next to the colorful VGA displays of some other recently released war games. As a strategy game, *Liberty* does a surprisingly good job of making the American Revolutionary War both entertaining and educational. Koei, which has traditionally focused on war games dealing with the rise and fall of Asian empires (e.g., Chinese dynasties and Japanese shogunates), has begun branching out as of late into western strategy settings. With products like *Liberty*, Koei's brand of war gaming has made a successful transition to games focusing on western conflicts.

Although lacking in state-of-the-art audiovisuals, *Liberty* offers a richly detailed and highly playable simulation of the beginning of our nation.

—Jeff James

Koei
One Bay Plaza, Suite 540
1350 Bayshore Highway
Burlingame, CA 94010
(415) 348-0200

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Andy felt it was a good simulation, but disappointing in its appearance; Chris said it appeals to a narrow audience. Mike called it an interesting hybrid.

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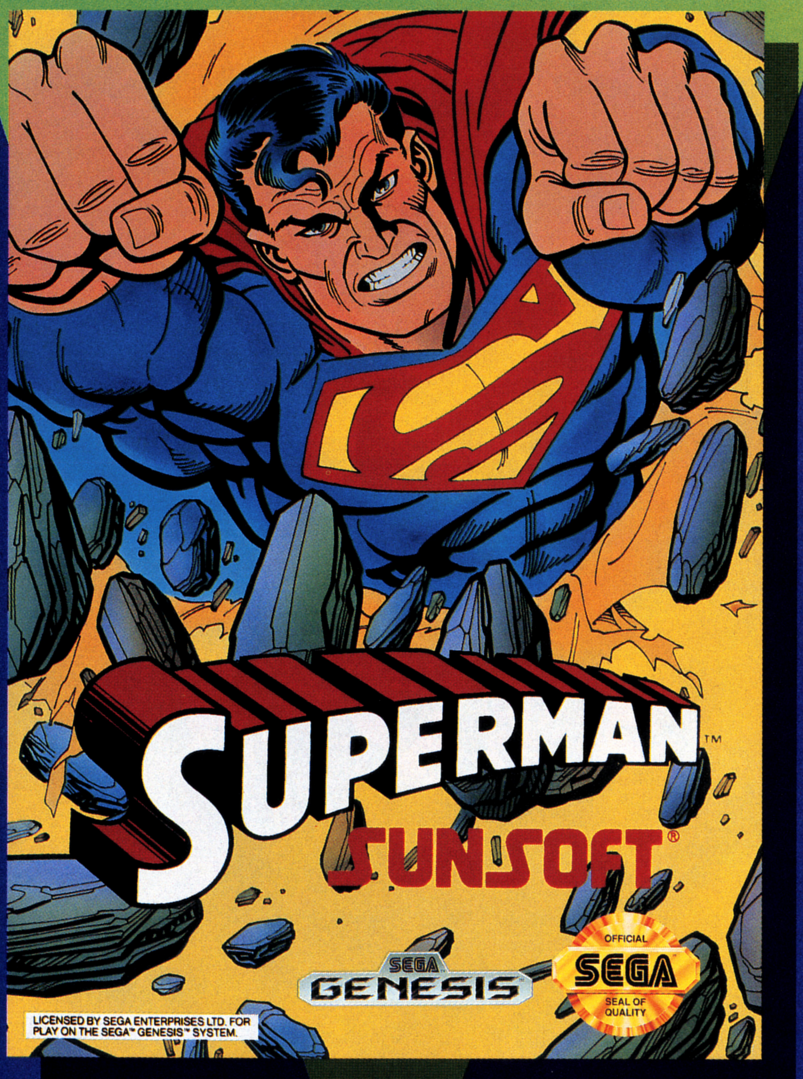

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CIRCLE #153 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Spellcasting 301: Spring Break

LEGEND ENTERTAINMENT

Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							■			
GRAPHICS							■			
PLAYABILITY							■			
OVERALL					■					

Ah, the sun, the sand, the scantily clad women—not to mention the gallons of alcohol: Welcome to *Spring Break*, the third installment in Steve Meretzky's *Spellcasting* series from Legend Entertainment. Once again we join Ernie Eaglebeak, promising student from Sorcerer University, as he and his frat brothers from Hu Delta Phart (HDP) partake in that most hedonistic of college rituals, spring break. Unfortunately, the game is about as memorable as a night filled with eight banana daiquiris. It turns out to be a mediocre variation on the *Revenge of the Nerds* movies, with a healthy dash of fantasy and magic added.

Although many of its puzzles are challenging, *Spring Break*'s plot never rises above adolescent. Once Ernie and his fratmates arrive at Fort Naughtytail and check in at their hotel, they go to the beach to begin their festivities. Soon after stretching out, the brothers of HDP (nerds, one and all) are confronted by the brothers of Getta Loda Yu (GLY), a jockish frat from a rival school.

Timely spellcasting allows HDP to equal GLY in weightlifting, after which a stunning woman emerges and proposes a contest between the two frats, the winner getting free run of the beach.

From then on, it's mind against muscle, as Ernie scours the surrounding area to acquire the necessary spells and items that will allow HDP to win events ranging from a brawl to body surfing and bullfighting. Along the way, he runs through a series of amorous adventures. (For a nerd, Ernie scores early and often.)

Spring Break, like its two predecessors, is basically a text adventure accompanied by still graphics. The interface is exceptionally good and user-friendly. Orders can be typed or, with a mouse, clicked in from a handy list of acceptable verbs, prepositions and objects. A mapping feature greatly facilitates movement from place to place. The generally strong graphics include a number of digitized photos of women in swimsuits or lingerie. As with the other *Spellcasting* games there are "naughty" and "nice" modes—the nice mode puts dresses over the lingerie and limits some of Ernie's options.

Spring Break falters badly, however, in the story itself. While a few of the puzzles require complicated solutions (the belly flop contest is particularly good), the game never rises above its exploitation-film plot. Except for the very end, the contest between the frats constitutes the entire story line.

Both the humor and the erotica in *Spellcasting 301* are horribly juvenile. This is fun initially, but wears thin by the first sunset. On top of countless mediocre puns (the flying carpet is made by Win-a-Bagel), the jokes include scatological humor (a bottle of laxative is used at one point). Strictly PG, even in the "naughty" mode the graphics show nothing bawdier than exposed cleavage in the background, while the text rarely goes beyond heavy innuendo. Finally, the game is as sexist as the films it mimics: Women are strictly sex objects.

Mammary-obsessed male teenagers and those who have every spring break film on tape might enjoy this game; for all others, it has all the appeal of a can of warm beer.

—David N. Eadington

Accolade
5300 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 500
San Jose, CA 95129
(408) 985-1700

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE							■			
CB							■			
DM						■				
MD								■		

Dave thought the game had a great driver, but lacked a good story. Chris felt it had a dry presentation (though he liked the "naughty" mode).

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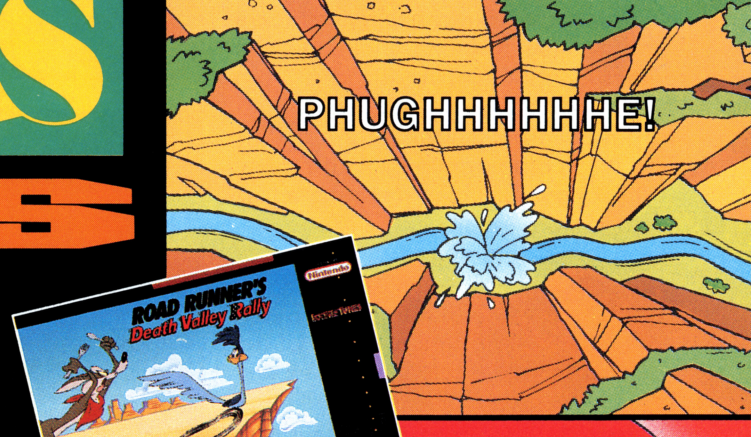

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LOONEY TUNES

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CIRCLE #154 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Carriers at War

SSG

Version: IBM PC ($69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

An update to the 8-bit classic of the same name, SSG's new *Carriers at War* (*CAW*) brings one of the most playable war games ever to the IBM PC arena.

Set in the war-torn Pacific Theater in World War II, *CAW* lets you reenact six of the greatest carrier battles from that period. After choosing one of six scenarios (Pearl Harbor, Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomons, Santa Cruz or the Philippine Sea) and picking sides—either the Allies or the Japanese—you're ready to play. Each side begins with an historically accurate set of naval bases and carrier task forces. Issuing commands is simple, thanks to *CAW*'s intuitive graphical user interface. The bulk of the screen is occupied by a large overhead map of the combat area, with a strip of control icons at the extreme right of the screen. Simple pointing and clicking through several levels of icon control allows you to move naval task forces, launch air strikes, send out search planes and perform any of the myriad tasks required of a commanding admiral.

Although *CAW* does support play between two human players for a more realistic gaming challenge, the computer opponent in *CAW* is far from a pushover, thanks to SSG's new War-Room gaming system. Using War-Room, a computer-controlled enemy will act unpredictably, steaming a task force straight for objectives in one scenario, while playing a wily game of hide-and-seek in the next.

To assist you in hunting down your opponent, *CAW* offers a wealth of detail about every single ship, plane and land base at your disposal. Each unit—even aircraft—is treated individually by the computer, with each unit accompanied by a picture and a list of technical details.

As for graphics, *CAW* features crisp, high-resolution EGA/VGA graphics, perfect for displaying large numbers of units. Combat is accompanied by animated attacks upon targets, with bombs bursting into flame on carrier decks and stricken planes trailing streams of smoke as they plunge from the sky. Sound through a Sound Blaster card was complete with the sounds of exploding bombs and racing torpedoes.

Nothing is perfect, and *CAW* is no exception. When operated in EGA mode, *CAW*'s graphics appear washed out and oddly colored. The otherwise excellent 136-page manual (filled with historical information and screen shots) unfortunately lacks an index for finding things in a hurry. The six included scenarios—while amazingly replayable—won't hold your interest forever. Fortunately, a forthcoming scenario editor should be available soon, allowing gamers to create an endless supply of new scenarios.

Quibbles aside, *CAW* is what a lot of war gamers have been waiting for. SSG has managed to keep all of what made the original *CAW* so playable on the C-64 and Apple II while improving the artificial intelligence, polishing the interface and giving the game a fresh, crisp look for the '90s. The first version of *CAW* helped define computer war gaming; this new version is helping to refine it. If you've been waiting for the quintessential simulation of World War II carrier operations in the Pacific, wait no longer.

—Jeff James

Strategic Studies Group
8348 Monticello Drive
Pensacola, FL 32514
(904) 494-9373

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Andy called it a solid simulator, but was disappointed by the sound. Dave said that SSI could learn from SSG, which appears to be bringing new players into the genre.

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CIRCLE #155 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Red Zone

PSYGNOSIS

Version: Amiga ($49.99)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC									9	
GRAPHICS									9	
PLAYABILITY									9	
OVERALL									9	

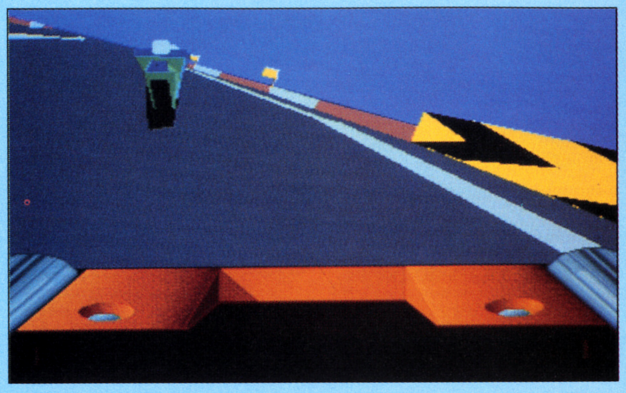
A motorcycle-racing game from Psygnosis? Why not? I'm still not sure what motivated Psygnosis to jump into the already overcrowded racing game genre, but I'm glad they did. *Red Zone* is one of the best.

Psygnosis has something of a reputation for ignoring player conveniences, but that certainly doesn't apply to *Red Zone*. I've never seen a racing game with so many configuration options.

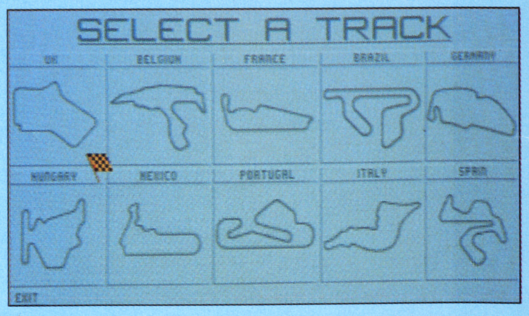
Control is what makes or breaks a racing game, and *Red Zone*'s makes it. It lets you use either mouse or joystick, and you can tailor the control to your own reflexes. As far as I'm concerned, the mouse is the way to go. There's a slider that lets you adjust the mouse sensitivity; in my case, I set it to "swimming through jello" and it took me about five minutes to learn how to steer. I usually have a terrible time getting the hang of a racing simulation, but now I can drive *Red Zone* better than I can my car.

The basic graphics are polygon-based, but are overlaid in places with bit maps, a technique Psygnosis has learned to use to good effect over the years. If you prefer speed over scenery, you can turn off various elements of detail, such as the crowds and buildings. If you turn off enough of the details, it's almost like racing through the countryside instead of around a track. I do recommend leaving as much of the detail turned on as possible; there are some wonderful touches of gratuitous animation, such as a blimp that files around while you race.

The tracks supplied with *Red Zone* range from very easy to teeth-grindingly difficult, and you can practice any of them as much as you want. I prefer racing alone, but the game does have a full competitive mode, where you can participate in a single race or a whole season of racing. While you can choose the skill level of your computer opponents, even those at the klutz level can't be beaten without some effort.



So what *don't* I like about *Red Zone*? I can only think of one thing: When I was just starting out, I managed to get my bike turned sideways and ran it into a wall. There's a command for recentering it on the track, but, no matter what I did, I couldn't get the bike turned, and I eventually had to reboot to get out of the situation. I've combed the manual and hit every key, but I can't find any way to abort a race in progress—and there should be one.



If you have never bought a racing game, *Red Zone* is the one to get. Its customizability will let you learn it easily, and then it will keep pace with you as you get better at it. The only thing I would suggest is that you put a fan on top of your monitor and aim it to blow into your face. The wind in your hair and the bugs in your teeth are the only things missing from *Red Zone*.

—Tom Malcom

Psygnosis
29 St. Mary's Court
Brookline, MA 02146
(617) 731-3553

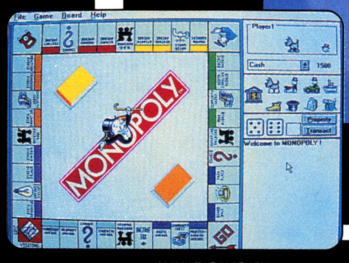
EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE									9	
CB									9	
DM								8		
MD								8		

Mike mentioned that *Red Zone* provides a different perspective for a motorcycle-race simulation. Dave thought it was a good use of polygon technology.

Trade Up!

The Game You Grew Up With Has Grown Up Too!



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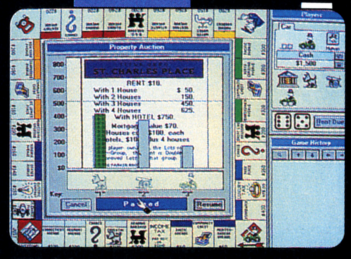

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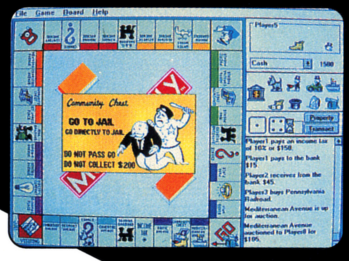

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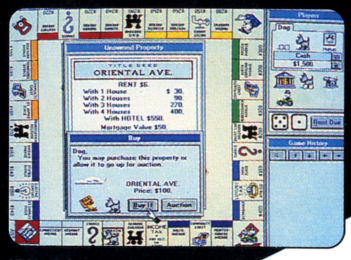

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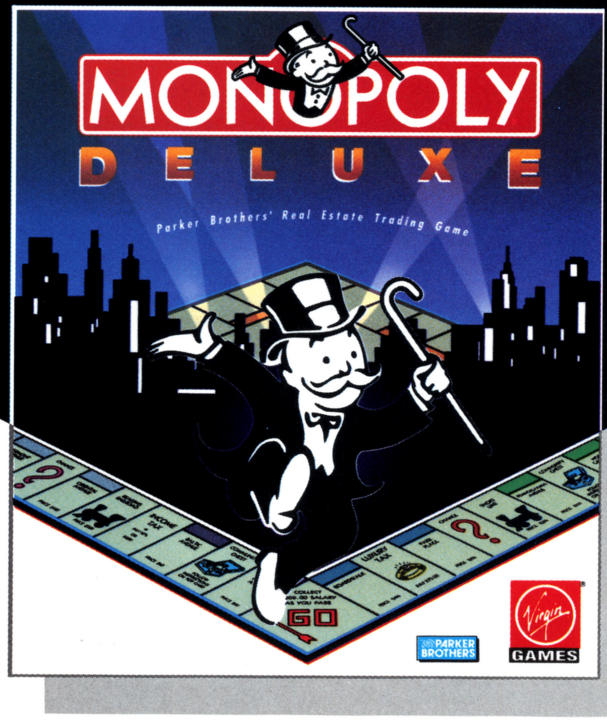

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Put

An interview with Terry Banks, Tester/Sega Menacer.™

a shooting

How is the Menacer any different from other video shooting controllers?

There are four different ways you can play with the Menacer. Hold it in your hand for a sure shot, add the stabilizer to shoot commando style, add binoculars for dual vision, or use all three for full tilt action.

gallery in your

How does it work?

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living room without

They're all shooting type games?

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ruining

What's your favorite game?

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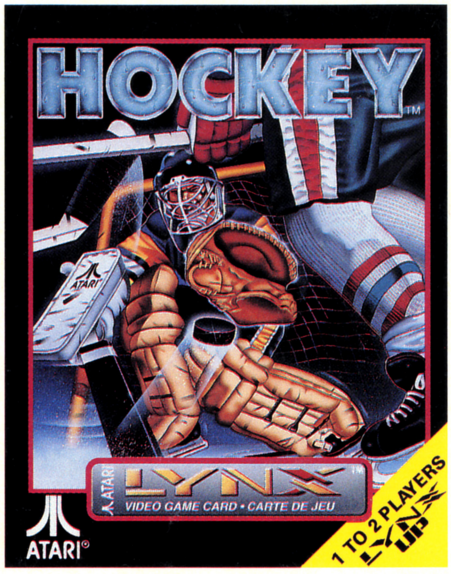

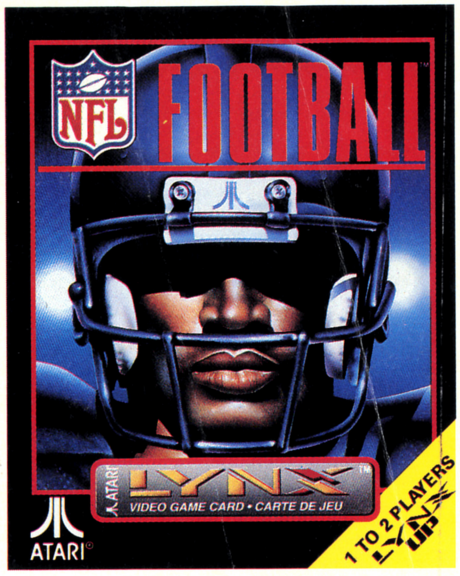

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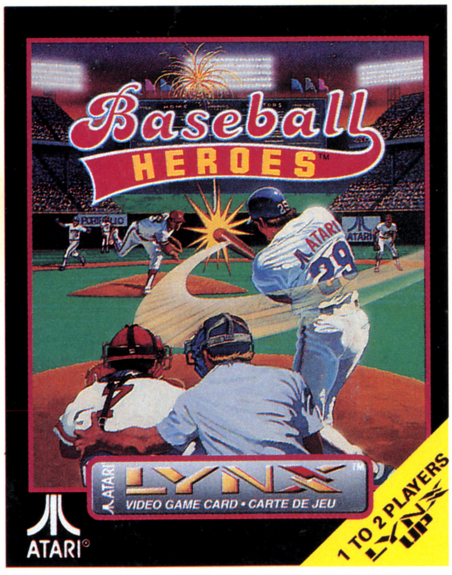

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